

EXPLORATIONS IN KANNELMÄKI

Master's Thesis
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EXPLORATIONS iN KANNELMÄKI

Building design knowledge through
practice-based design research

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the suburban area of Kannelmäki in Helsinki, and explores how to involve residents in a design process aimed at ameliorating the liveability of the area through local collaboration. Sustainable development is here considered as sustainable wellbeing, where an active form of wellbeing is proposed and people are encouraged to actively contribute to the shaping of their living environment. Learning how to involve people in local social design projects is one of the areas of sustainable design that needs to be developed in order to address real societal issues through design.

This thesis project is linked to the academic workshop Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood, organized by the Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, and held in Kannelmäki in May 2012. In this thesis a series of initiatives, referred to as explorations, are described. The explorations were carried out before, during and after the academic workshop. The explorations aimed at getting to know the area through the residents' perceptions, while the ways in which a designer can best approach and involve people in a local design process throughout its phases were explored. Furthermore, the role of design as a way to bring people from an area together in order to catalyse local collaboration was considered.

The research method used in the explorations is explorative, practice-based design research. Based on the insights gained through the explorations, guidelines for how to carry out a design process in a local social context are provided. Participatory design approaches are considered a promising direction for a designer who aims to design in a sustainable way. The guidelines represent design knowledge that other designers can benefit from and build upon. The design process described, and further design processes where the traditional notion of design is challenged, contribute to changing the direction of the design practice.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Design, Participatory Design, Collaboration, Social Wellbeing, Practice-based Design Research, Design Knowledge, Kannelmäki

Prologue

What is worth designing in a world already crammed with objects? During my education in the field of design, I have been thinking a lot about the challenges related to my future profession. I started studying glass design, then continued with industrial design and am now concluding my master's degree studies in the multidisciplinary program of *Creative Sustainability*. Throughout this education I have been concerned with how to justify any new design object in a world increasingly struggling with the burden of pollution and waste. I have been wondering how a designer should take into account social and environmental issues, when most design projects are carried out in order to make economic profit. I have also been bothered by the fact that even if one tries to be a responsible designer, it is hard to know whether one is doing any good when setting out to improve existing circumstances.

While studying industrial design, I started to question why I should learn how to successfully design one more table, chair or cup, when everything I saw in design magazines, shops and fairs seemed to be slight variations of already existing products. I became interested in areas such as service design and design thinking. However, moving away from designing objects did not seem to be enough, as *design beyond objects* also to a great extent is *design for the market*; here the outcomes are products too, but only of a different, intangible kind. I started to look into responsible and sustainable design. I came across articles and books where an alternative agenda for designers was written about in a very convincing way. Many authors, such as Manzini, Thackara, Margolin and Fuad-Luke propose a way to design, in which the main goal should be to address real societal issues while carefully considering how natural resources are consumed. Even though the potential of design as an agent for change has been promoted both within and outside the field of design, I was faced with the difficulty of knowing how one should act as a responsible designer when aiming for positive societal impact.

The way I currently think about design is strongly connected to *collaboration*. Within the discussion regarding sustainable design, collaboration is frequently mentioned, often in the sense that the designer should collaborate with other professional fields to be able to carry out projects related to sustainable development. The designer can have an important role as an *intermediator* between different professions within a project. Complex problems need to be addressed collaboratively by specialists from different fields in order to reach a desirable outcome. During my studies in the *Creative Sustainability* program I have had the

opportunity to collaborate with students from different fields, in order to be more prepared for collaboration with other professionals in the future. During my Master's degree it has occurred to me that it is not only important to learn how to collaborate with other professionals within a design project, but also to explore how to involve and work with those who will be affected by the design outcome. For even if a group of skilled professionals collaborate in order to improve a given situation, the challenge of knowing whether their work has positive repercussions remains.

Going through a set of small crises, which in retrospect I can see as a learning process or a personal development towards my future profession, I now find myself thinking about design rather as a process than as an outcome; seeing it as a way of thinking, a set of actions and a way of collaborating with others. It seems that people outside the design profession still consider designers as those providing style to fancy products or physical environments. This notion of design is slowly changing with each design project carried out in a manner that manifests an alternative way of designing, challenging the traditional *design of products for the market* and showing that designers can have a meaningful role in the development of sustainable societies.

My thesis project aims to contribute to changing the notion of design, while also being to a great extent a personal exploration into how to carry out a design process where the goal is to design *with* people rather than designing *for* them. The process is heavily influenced and inspired by those people who have contributed to it. The project relates to collaboration in many ways. It builds on the idea that sustainability requires collaboration. By bringing people together new forms of collaboration can emerge, allowing for positive impacts both socially and environmentally. With an interest in the resources found within interpersonal relationships, I have explored the way in which a designer can encourage people to take action and improve their own living environment. The project builds on the mind-set that the purpose of design should be to collaboratively move towards more sustainable ways of living. The first step for me as a designer is to better understand how to design *with* people in a local context and in what ways design can encourage new forms of collaboration.

iNTRODUCTION

Learning how to involve local people in projects aimed at improving their living environment is one of the areas of sustainable design that needs to be developed.

1. Introduction

Designers are trying to find new ways to work in order to reach more sustainable ways of designing and dealing with real societal issues, that is, ways in which those affected by the design outcome are involved in the design process. This thesis focuses on the suburban area of Kannelmäki in Helsinki, and explores how to involve residents in a design process that is aimed at increasing the liveability of the area. The shift towards sustainable design is on-going; more practice-based research is needed in order to better understand how design skills can be applied to a wide range of societal issues. Learning how to involve local people in projects aimed at improving their living environment is one of the areas of sustainable design that needs to be developed.

In the beginning of May 2012 a workshop called “*Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood*” was held in Kannelmäki¹. The objective of the workshop was to find ways to design proposals for revitalizing the area by involving the residents of the area in the design process. This thesis project is linked to the workshop, and within this thesis a series of initiatives that the author was involved in prior, during, and after the workshop, are described.

Throughout this thesis project, which began in autumn 2011, the following questions have been explored;

-How do the residents of Kannelmäki perceive their living environment, and what would they like to improve?

-How should a designer approach the residents of an area, in order to involve them in a design process aiming at making their living environment more liveable?

-What kinds of initiatives can bring people in a suburban area together, in order to create a more socially cohesive neighbourhood?

These questions are explored since sustainability requires new forms of collaboration. One way designers can encourage collaboration is by more widely applying design within society. It is important for designers to learn how to approach and collaborate with people outside the design profession in order to make the design and decision making processes more open. Within this thesis sustainable development is seen as the creation of human wellbeing, where the on-going interaction between human activity and the environment are taken carefully into consideration.

¹ For further information about the workshop see chapter 2.

On a local level one form of sustainable development can be about increasing social wellbeing, moving away from consumer culture towards a culture more focused on doing than on having. Social wellbeing can be related to increasing social connections in a neighbourhood and encouraging people to take initiative to improve their living environment. Relationships with other people and participation in community activities are important for a person's social wellbeing. Each collective action taken within a community can give birth to further forms of collaboration that makes the area more cohesive. A socially cohesive community has a better capacity to tackle challenges than a fragmented one.

The Kannelmäki initiatives described within this thesis can be seen as efforts to bring people together, so that new forms of social interaction can emerge to strengthen the local community. However, the main objective throughout the thesis process has been to try out different methods and explore ways in which a designer can enter and get to know an area through the residents' opinions, as well as trying out different approaches to involve the residents in a design process that focuses on the liveability of their living environment. The method used is exploratory practice-based design research, which is a qualitative research method. The design process is described by presenting each step in the series of initiatives referred to as explorations. It is explained why and how each exploration was carried out, while evaluating and reflecting upon the findings. By describing the process, and by reflecting upon the process-based learning experience, guidelines for a participatory process in a local social context are outlined.

Since the design process described within this thesis consists of several layers, the theories behind it cover a vast field of research. An array of different theoretical viewpoints from the fields of design and social sciences has led the author to examine the area of participatory design approaches in a local social context. These theoretical viewpoints have also affected the way in which the explorations were carried out. In chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 these viewpoints are described and their relevance is explained. The theoretical viewpoints are summarised in figure 1.

The workshop *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood*, to which this thesis work relates, is described briefly in chapter 2. Since this thesis project proposes one direction for sustainable design, the approach taken to sustainable development is described in chapter 3. Within chapter 4 the design theories and ideologies that have affected the way the author refers to design and have led her to carry out a set of initiatives in a local social context, are discussed. Based on the ideas presented in chapter 4, participatory approaches are seen as a promising direction for sustainable design, therefore this area is described in chapter 5. An explanation of the concepts from the field of social sciences is given in chapter 6. Within chapter 7 the explorations carried out in Kannelmäki are described, with the results being presented in chapter 8. The results and the process are discussed in chapter 9, where a set of guidelines based on the explorations, aimed at helping

other designers to carry out a design process in a local social context, are outlined. Finally, in chapter 10, conclusions are drawn, while discussing the possibilities of building upon the design knowledge attained. In addition, chapter 11 contains a set of appendices, where a more detailed description of a design framework presented in chapter 6, as well as additional descriptions of two explorations are given. The appendices are targeted at readers who are interested in a more through presentation of the aforementioned subjects.

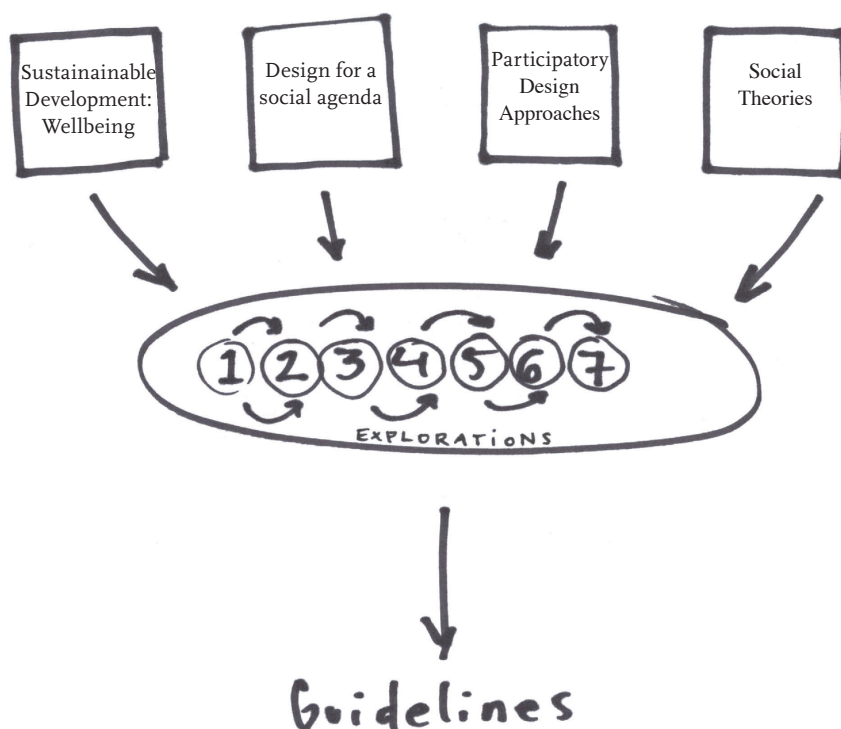


Figure 1: Theoretical viewpoints

REPICTURING
SUBURBAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD



HOW WOULD YOU EXPRESS TECHNOLOGY?

SELECT SOME OF YOUR PICTURES, YOUR DRAWING MATERIALS, & THAT YOU CAN ASSOCIATE WITH YOUR IDEAL TECHNOLOGY.

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WORKSHOP / TYOPATA

HOW WOULD YOU
COMMUNICATE?
in 100 years.

2. Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood

This thesis project is linked to the *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood* (RSN) course, which was held as a workshop in the suburban area of Kannelmäki, Helsinki during one week in May 2012. This academic course was one of the courses within Aalto University's 365 Wellbeing initiative under the umbrella of Helsinki World Design Capital 2012 (WDC Helsinki 2012 ca. 2012). The RSN-course was also part of the European AH-design project called TANGO (TANGO ca. 2012). The RSN-course focused on the identity of Kannelmäki, and aimed at finding ways to improve the everyday life of its residents. The aim of the course was to revitalize the area by involving those who live there. Within the workshop, questions of social wellbeing, sustainability and intergenerational dialogue were considered. (365 Wellbeing ca. 2012.)

AH-DESIGN / TANGO

Accessible and Sustainable design were the main objectives within the European cultural project which was done in collaboration between L'École de design Nantes Atlantique, France, Politecnico di Milano, Italy and Aalto University in Helsinki. During the project, lasting from 2011 to 2013, workshops considering wellbeing, sustainability, social inclusion and dialogue between different age groups were organized by the three design schools. The main outcomes from the workshops were exhibited in a traveling exhibition in Nantes, Milan and Helsinki during the spring of 2013. The workshops and the exhibition, under the name TANGO, explored how design can improve people's everyday life and living environment while taking sustainability questions into consideration. (TANGO ca. 2012.)

365 WELLBEING

During the Helsinki World Design Capital 2012, Aalto University organized a program called Living+, which focused on creating more sustainable living environments (Living+ ca.2012). The 365 Wellbeing initiative was part of Living+ and was mainly carried out by the School of Arts, Design and Architecture. There were 12 projects within the 365 Wellbeing initiative, all focusing on how design can help people to live healthier lives. Social issues were addressed and the projects involved people who represented those to whom the design outcomes were aimed. Areas such as mental healthcare, issues in the lives of elderly, smoking dependence and suburban living were addressed within the projects. (365 Wellbeing ca. 2012.) The 365 Wellbeing initiative can be seen as an effort to show ways in which designers and design students can collaborate with a various range of stakeholders, in order to take more active roles as change makers within society.

SUSTAiNABLE
DEVELOPMENT AS
SUSTAiNABLE
WELLBEiNG

The approach to sustainable development taken in this thesis supports the idea that focusing on human wellbeing requires the environment to be taken seriously into consideration in all forms of decision making.

3. Sustainable Development as Sustainable Wellbeing

Within this thesis design knowledge is built through practice based design research in a local social context, with the aim of finding ways for the designer to contribute to sustainable development on a local level. This thesis demonstrates one promising direction for designers wishing to work in responsible and sustainable ways, in other words, it shows one direction for sustainable design. In order to discuss sustainable design the concept of sustainable development needs to be explained. As the concept is very broad and highly contested, the aim here is not to give a definitive description of the concept, but rather explain the view upon which this thesis work relies.

Sustainable development is the process by which we move towards sustainability, whereas sustainability can be defined as the capacity for continuance into the long-term future, and should be the primary goal for human beings (Porratt 2005, 21). Sustainable development has been defined in many different ways and is a hard-to-grasp concept since the terms sustainable and development can both refer to many different aspects. The concept has emerged as a solution to the growing concern of the impact of human activities on the environment (Bridger & Luloff 1999, 377). The most widely quoted definition of sustainable development is that of the Brundtland report; *“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (WCED 1987, 43). This definition is vague and broad, which has led to a variety of interpretations and confusion with regards to what sustainable development actually means.

Business, governments, social reformers and environmental activists have adopted the concept of sustainable development, although they all have their own interpretation, each of which is based upon different world-views (Giddings et al. 2002). Despite the differing views on what sustainable development means, the concept can broadly be described as an attempt to combine growing concerns about environmental issues with socio-economic issues. A common model for illustrating sustainable development is by three separate but connected rings of environment, society and economy. (Hopwood et al. 2005.) According to Giddings et al. (2002) this model is very limited, as it assumes a separation of the three areas and ignores the important connections between them. Instead they suggest a model where the boundaries between the different areas are broken down, since, as economy exists within society, there is no reason to separate economy from other human activities. Within their model human activity and wellbeing are intercon-

nected with the environment. They explain that humanity is dependent on the environment, whereas the environment would survive without us. Yet, there is an on-going interaction between human activities and the environment where both are affected by the other. (Giddings et al. 2002.) Porritt (2005, 22) also describes sustainable development in relation to human wellbeing, stating that: “*It is a social and economic project as much as an environmental project, with the very positive objective of optimizing human wellbeing.*” Porritt's statement refers to social, economic and environmental issues, the three areas commonly described as separate when referring to sustainable development. Despite this, the statement is not necessarily in conflict with the model proposed by Giddings et al. since their model does not ignore the economy, but places it within the rest of the human activities.

Giddings et al. (2002) note that removing the separation of economy and society and redefining sustainable development to focus on human wellbeing does not fully clarify the confusion related to the concept. There are no clear agreements on what values should guide decisions related to human wellbeing, but it is evident that sustainable development will force us to change the way we see the world. According to Giddings et al. (2005), we can no longer separate the consequences of our activities into different areas, since we are part of a web of connections within the environment and the society. (Giddings et al. 2002.) The idea that profound changes in the way we understand and act within society are needed, is referred to as *the transformation approach* by Hopwood et al. (2005). *The transformation approach* is one of the three main approaches to sustainable development defined by Hopwood et al. within the wide spectrum of how sustainable development is understood and discussed within different fields. The supporters for the other two main approaches, *status quo* and *reform*, recognize the need for change but argue that adjustments and changes are needed only to a certain degree. The supporters of the transformation approach strive towards fundamental changes since they believe that the socio-economic and environmental problems humanity faces are rooted in the society and in how humans relate to their environment. Structures of economy and power within the current society are usually not primarily concerned with human wellbeing or environmental sustainability. (Hopwood et al. 2005.)

The approach to sustainable development taken in this thesis supports the idea that focusing on human wellbeing requires the environment to be taken into serious consideration in all forms of decision making. This approach is transformational as there will have to be fundamental changes in order for decisions to be made based on a recognition of the continuous interaction between human activities and the environment. A fundamental change in how design is practiced is also required and will be discussed in the following chapters.

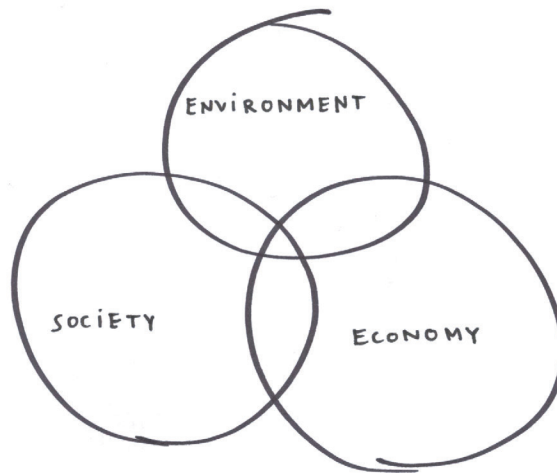


FIGURE 2:
COMMON THREE-RING SECTOR VIEW OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(ADAPTED BY GIDDINGS ET AL. 2002).



FIGURE 3:
BREAKING DOWN BOUNDARIES: MERGING SOCIETY AND ECONOMY
AND OPENING UP TO THE ENVIRONMENT (ADAPTED BY GIDDINGS ET AL. 2002).

WELLBEING: ONE WAY OF DEFINING THE CONCEPT

If sustainable development, as proposed above, should focus on human wellbeing, there is likely to be a similar confusion related to the concept of wellbeing, as related to sustainability. Dodge et al. (2012) explain how, within the research regarding wellbeing, there are multiple different attempts to define the word. In many cases frameworks and descriptions are focused upon, instead of finding appropriate and universal ways to refer to the term. The concept of wellbeing is complex and multi-layered, and therefore it needs a definition where different aspects and the dynamic nature of the concept are taken into consideration. (Dodge et al. 2012.) The definition proposed by Dodge et al. (2012, 230) is a figure where a person's psychological, social and physical resources are placed on one side of a see-saw. The other side of the see-saw represents the challenges, which also are psychological, social and physical. In the middle of the figure is the *set-point* for wellbeing. The figure illustrates the balance between the resources and the challenges, with the ideal state being equilibrium between the resources and challenges. However, there is no final state since wellbeing is linked to an on-going balance between the resources available at a certain moment and the challenges faced at that particular moment. (Dodge 2012, 230.)

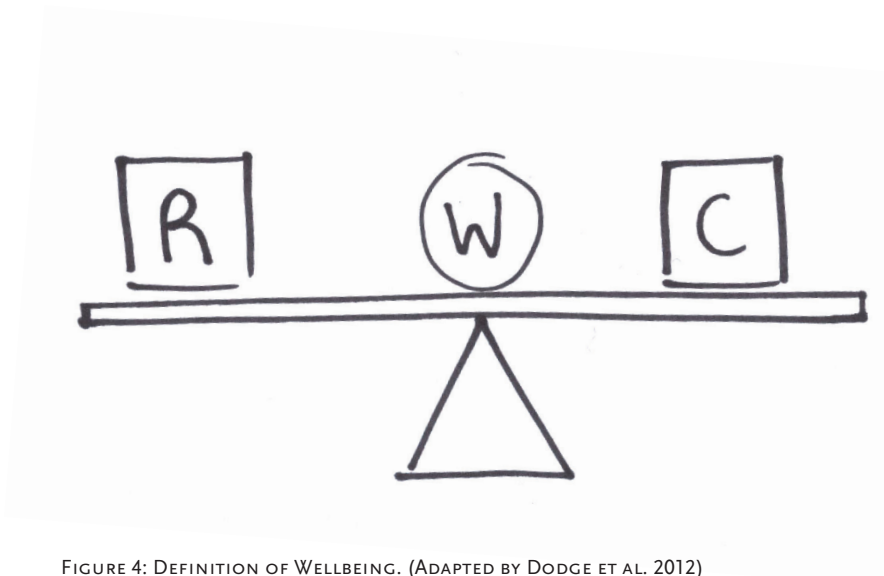


FIGURE 4: DEFINITION OF WELLBEING. (ADAPTED BY DODGE ET AL. 2012)
R=RESOURCES, W=WELLBEING, C=CHALLENGES

DESIGN THEORIES:
TURNING TOWARDS
A SOCIAL AGENDA

In order for the design profession to shift focus from a market-centred design approach towards a societal approach, the notion of design within society needs to change.

4. Design theories: Turning towards a social agenda

The explorations carried out in Kannelmäki, presented in chapter 7, build upon many different design areas. Within this chapter an overview of the different design areas that have influenced the explorations done in Kannelmäki, is given. The aim is to clarify the underlying ideas and theories for the design process, while explaining the way the areas described relate to the project. The different ways of thinking about design, which have led the author towards an interest in participatory design approaches in a local social context, are introduced. The theories described in this chapter overlap to some extent as they are all linked to finding alternative paths for designers with goals that are societal rather than commercial or economical.

PERCEPTIONS OF DESIGN

There is not one single definition of the term *design* (Erlhoff & Marshall 2008, 104). Design can be seen as a rather confusing term, used in many different contexts, representing ways of doing, thinking and acting while simultaneously being linked to the act of giving form to physical products. Among professional designers it is widely acknowledged that designing contains much more than simply focusing on the physical attributes of products, such as aesthetics or choice of material. Outside the design profession it seems that designers are often seen as those who are concerned with the physical appearance of the man-made environment. The widely quoted phrase by Herbert Simon (1996, 111) “*Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.*” describes design as an action aimed at improvement, not only being done within the design profession, but as an activity performed by all human beings. Simon (1996, 114) sheds light on the difference between the natural sciences and design, the first being concerned with how things are and the latter with how things ought to be. However both science and design are tools for understanding the world, while they also serve as tools for acting (Simon 1996, p 164).

Design is often seen as a synonym to the development that started as a result of the industrialization in the late 18th century, when product development was in need of artistic skills in order to give form to the appearance of products (Vihma 2008, 10-12). The way design has been understood within society has to a great extent been interlinked to industrial production and marketing. Whitely (1993) has in his book “*Design For Society*” advocated for a way of practicing design, where design, instead of being market- and consumer-led, should focus on its

potential to effect change. Whitley (1993) argues that design should be based upon an ideology more profound than that of styling products for the market which are produced and consumed in ways that result in severe environmental and societal consequences. Whitley's *"Design for Society"* makes clear connections to Victor Papanek's *"Design for the Real World"* which can be seen as one of the early voices criticizing the industrial design profession and practice. Papanek (1970) argues that design should meet the needs of people instead of their wants. According to Papanek (1970, 11) design is fundamental to all human activity and is a conscious effort of creating meaningful order within chaos. Despite harsh criticism towards how industrial design has been practiced, Papanek (1970) brings forth the potential of design to serve a wider purpose than that of mass-producing goods for the market. Linking to Papanek and Simon, Thackara (2005, 1) simply states that *"Design is what human beings do"*. Design in this thesis is seen as a process and activity that strongly affects our lives, and is considered an agent for positive change. Design processes are not necessarily carried out only by trained designers but as a collaborative process between designers and various stakeholders.

THE NOTION OF DESIGN

How design is understood and discussed within the design field often differs from the public notion of design. During the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012 (WDC 2012) the projects carried out related to the design year provoked discussion among the public about what design actually is. The main theme for WDC 2012 was *"Open Helsinki – Embedding design in life"*, with the aim of taking a collaborative approach and integrating design in new areas, where sustainability and social dimensions remain central (WDC Helsinki 2012 ca. 2012). In an article discussing a survey done among residents of Helsinki regarding WDC 2012, it is claimed that the overall message of the design year remained blurry, while advertisement and graphics were visible all over the city (Pöppönen 2012a). Pöppönen (2012b) comments on the summary of the survey, stating that the results can be seen only later on, as it is still too early to say whether the design year has had positive repercussions for the city. While some seem critical towards the actual results of WDC 2012, others argue that the year has at least increased awareness of the wide variety of projects carried out in the design field. In Pöppönen's (2012c) essay about how the notion of design has changed, he argues that what has been understood as *Finnish Design* until now is linked to prominent names such as Kaj Franck and Alvar Aalto, and to the products and buildings designed by them. According to Pöppönen (2012c) the design year has challenged the notion of design by introducing events and activities which have not formerly been linked to design, under the umbrella of design.

Design is now becoming a difficult term since it can be used in so many different ways. This is also one reason for why the design year in Helsinki provoked discussion about what it has achieved to provide for the city's residents. The editorial in Helsingin Sanomat on the 28th of November 2012 points towards a similar direction as was argued by Pöppönen (2012b); the year can be seen as successful if it has managed to provoke new ideas about design within as many sectors as possible (Anon 2012). If, as has been argued in Helsingin Sanomat, the design year has succeeded in broadening, or at least challenging the public notion of design, this can be seen as one step towards integrating design in society to a greater extent. In order for the design profession to shift its focus from a *market-centred design approach* towards a *societal approach*, the notion of design within society needs to change. If designers are to find partners outside the traditional domain, a wider knowledge about the potential of design and its varied nature needs to reach the greater public. This can be done by carrying out design projects where the true nature of design is demonstrated. This was done in many of the design initiatives within WDC 2012, and was one of the motivations behind the explorations carried through in Kannelmäki.

RESPONSIBLE DESIGN

Design has long been, and is still today, strongly linked to unsustainable ways of producing and consuming. As the far reaching negative environmental and social consequences are becoming more apparent, several voices both within the field of design and within other fields are now insisting on a change in our current ways of producing and consuming. These changes also mean a shift in the focus of how designers work. Papanek (1970, 7) argues that industrial design is among the most dangerous professions, as there have been severe consequences resulting from the products industrial designers have designed. Manzini (2007, 233) also refers to the design profession as being responsible for creating the environmental, social and economic problems we now have to tackle. Several other authors have argued in the same direction. Margolin (1998), Whitley (1993) and Fuad-Luke (2007, 2009) among others, have highlighted the relationship between the problems related to sustainability and design activities. Even though many problems we are faced with today are the results of design decisions (Thackara 2005, 1), designers have seldom alone made these decisions. The problem with design is that even small actions can have wide reaching consequences (Thackara 2005, 7). What is important in contemporary design is to not focus on how design has been practiced in the past, but rather to focus on its future direction. Designers need to recognize the far reaching consequences design acts can have, and consider more carefully their own role within various design projects (Tatum 2004). The above mentioned authors, Manzini, Margolin, Whitley and Fuad-Luke, are among those who present alternative ways of designing, with a potential for positive change, and also provide

examples of design directions where both social and environmental concerns are taken into account.

The power of design and the difficulty of foreseeing consequences linked to design brings with it a responsibility that each person concerned with design decisions needs to consider. However, design does not only bring a huge responsibility, it also brings a large set of opportunities. (Tatum 2004). These opportunities are embedded in the nature of design to act as an agent for change, and to the wide variety of directions that design projects can take. The notion of design within society relates to what role designers will have in the future. Each new design project carries with it a responsibility in shaping the future role of design within society. With regards to this thesis project, exploring the area of local social design is a way to take a design responsibility. Within this thesis one promising future direction for designers is considered, where the design process is based upon collaboration, while aiming at catalysing new forms of collaboration in a local context. This thesis project can also be seen as a responsible design project as it focuses on intangible social resources and already existing frameworks, rather than on finding gaps where new products can be introduced.

SOCIAL DESIGN

If design is linked to the nature of human beings (Papanek 1970, Simon 1996, Thackara 2005) one could claim that all design is to some extent social. *Social design* however, often points towards taking a social responsibility within design, where the main motivation is social rather than economical. Papanek (1970) strongly promoted the idea of design for a social agenda, contrasting social design against design for the market. It has been argued that one reason for Papanek's ideas remaining as an alternative and narrow field in design, as opposed to being widely put into practice within the design profession, is due to the overtly simplistic way of approaching the development of an alternative design agenda (see for example: Margolin 1998, Margolin & Margolin 2002, Morelli 2007). Instead of seeing design for the market and design with a social agenda as opposites, these two could be seen as a continuum (Margolin & Margolin 2002, Morelli 2007). Arguing that the main motivation of design should be something other than focusing primarily on economic profit does not necessarily mean that design should ignore the market entirely.

Rethinking design, detaching it from primarily being market oriented towards acting both inside and outside the market economy, is essential if the design practice is to address problems related to sustainability (Margolin 1998, 91), and is what combines projects referred to as *social design*. The term *social design* is referred to in many different ways and is part of the widening terminology related to design. In many cases social design refers to design projects carried out in developing countries (Miettinen 2007), or design projects for underserved populations

(Margolin & Margolin 2002, 29). This thesis project has traits of social design as it focuses on social aspects, such as social relationships and wellbeing. In this respect focusing on design in a local social context can be seen as social design, where the primary agenda for the project is social rather than commercial.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The notion of sustainable design is still commonly linked to how to produce and consume in ways that have a smaller burden on the natural environment than the current production and consumption-cycle. The way designers have until now focused on the triple bottom line or eco-design has had little effect on mainstream design (Fuad-Luke 2007, 19-51). According to Fuad-Luke (2007, 19-51) most designers do not focus on sustainable development, and even if they do there seems to be a difficulty of knowing what issues to address. In a similar manner to the confusion regarding what sustainable development actually means, designers are faced with the difficulty of knowing how to practice sustainable design. As mentioned earlier, designers are not solely responsible for the entire design process, therefore it can be difficult for designers to carry out a sustainability agenda within traditional design projects. Instead of trying to guide traditional design towards a sustainability agenda, design should redefine itself and find a new purpose (Fuad-Luke 2007, 28).

Manzini (2006, 2007, 2009) has described the transition towards sustainability as a wide reaching and complex social learning process, where we must learn how to live better while consuming less of our environmental resources. Similarly Fuad-Luke (2007, 37) refers to sustainability as an ambition that needs to be both *cooperative* and *societal* and where a re-evaluation of societal values is required. Manzini (2009) states that the transition towards sustainability requires profound behavioural changes in our lifestyles, as well as in the way production and consumption are carried out and in the way designers act. The way Manzini and Fuad-Luke refer to the transition towards sustainability can be described as the *transformation approach*, identified by Hopwood et al. (2005), in which it is argued that sustainable development requires a fundamental societal change. In addition, both Manzini and Fuad-Luke argue that the way design is practiced should undergo fundamental changes. Manzini (2009) stresses that focusing only on eco-efficiency in design is not enough. Designers need to learn new ways of designing in a world that is currently undergoing change towards a knowledge based *network society*², as this change needs to be redirected towards sustainability. In order for design to have a role within the transition towards sustainability, designers need to reconsider their role within society. Sustainable design should no longer be one specific branch, but all design projects should consider sustainability. (Manzini 2009.) Fuad-Luke (2007, 18-51) stresses the importance of design detaching itself from economic growth, as it needs to find a new purpose. While

² Network society: Castells (2000) describes the nature and complex effects of the recent Information Technology Revolution and refers to the current era as the Information Age. In this current era functions and processes are mainly organized around networks. The network society is for the time being a capitalist society, where economies around the world have become growingly interdependent. (Castells 2000.)

design has had little impact on sustainable development until now, it is in fact sustainability that gives design an opportunity to create a new vision and purpose for itself (Fuad-Luke 2007, 25-28). Giddings et al. (2005) describe sustainable development as the development of human wellbeing, while Fuad-Luke (2007, 18-51) suggests that the new purpose for design, if it is to have a role within sustainable development, could be the creation of wellbeing.

SUSTAINABLE WELLBEING

According to Manzini (2007, 2009) designers have thus far promoted a product based wellbeing that is founded on consumption, but they should instead be active promoters of a new idea of wellbeing. *Active wellbeing* is how Manzini (2007, 248) refers to this new idea of wellbeing, challenging the traditional notion of product-based wellbeing. The mainstream idea of wellbeing, which is already starting to change, is based on the idea of minimizing human efforts by introducing products that will enable the users to do as little as possible. (Manzini 2007, 248.) The idea of product-based wellbeing has turned out to be unsustainable in terms of its environmental burden, and is rendering people passive while both ignoring and underestimating the skills and knowledge of the people being designed for (Manzini 2006). Designers should promote an idea of wellbeing where the capabilities of people are considered, while the shift in how wellbeing is understood moves from the user-centred way of designing towards an actor centred design approach (Manzini 2007). Thackara (2005) also speaks in favour of an idea of wellbeing, focused on people instead of objects, where the future depends much more on services based on people than on technology.

DESIGN FOR CONVIVIALITY

“People need new tools to work with, rather than tools that work for them.” (Illich 1973, 10).

Illich (1973) criticizes the way people in the industrialized world are taught to behave in a certain way, taught to listen to certain institutions and above all are overwhelmed with products that are dictating people's lives. The way in which Illich (1973) describes the industrialized society resembles the way Manzini (2007, 2009) refers to the product based idea of wellbeing. According to Illich (1973) the industrialization has turned the whole society into a machine where people are no longer expected or even capable of taking care of themselves. There is always someone else who can tell them what the best possible way of doing something would be, someone to teach people how something is to be done, or a machine that can do the work for them. The same people who, when given the right tools, would be perfectly capable of handling most things that occur in their daily lives by themselves, or amongst themselves. (Illich 1973.) The title of Illich's book *Tools*

for conviviality” refers to the new kind of tools that are needed in a “*convivial society*”. These tools are different than the tools within the industrialized society, as the way they are to be used is not predetermined, they are to be used by everyone and can be used in many different ways, depending on the need or desire of the user. The tools described in the book are not only physical tools, but also services and institutions, which need to be transformed so that people are not only seen as passive consumers, but active participants in shaping their own society. (Illich 1973.) In a similar manner Manzini (2007) envisions the active wellbeing and the actor-centred view on design, where design no longer makes the consumer passive but opens up possibilities for people to shape their lives as they want.

Sanders (2006a) draws a link to Illich’s “*Tools for conviviality*” and stresses the importance for designers to change direction from designing for people to designing with them, so that what we design will be convivial *tools* instead of industrial tools. Illich (1970) points towards the unsustainable industrial production and Sanders (2006a) points towards the unsustainable patterns within design, they both put forth aspects of production and consumption threatening the environment, in addition to the aforementioned social aspects where the ready-made products and services are making people passive at the cost of their wellbeing. The discontent of being regarded as mere consumers is, according to Sanders (2006a), starting to show among those who are designed for. Furthermore she states that there are clear signs towards a desire of being a creator among the same people who used to be regarded as mere consumers. Designers should use their creativity in order to amplify the creativity of others, and invite people to become co-creators of their own environment. Design should no longer focus on the materiality of things but on human experience, such as *learning, creating, working and playing*. (Sanders 2006a.) Illich (1970) argues for a de-professionalization, where certain tools are no longer prescribed to certain professions. He provides cooking as an example: “*Men do not have to be cooks to know how to prepare food*” (Illich 1970, 85). In a similar manner, Sanders’ (2006a) suggestion of using design as a tool to amplify the creativity of others points towards a society where designers are no longer the only ones who are designing. One does not need to be a designer in order to be creative.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

Manzini (e.g. 2007, 2009) describes the transition towards sustainability as a social learning process, while stressing the importance of social innovation, where a wide range of knowledge and capabilities is needed. Social innovations are “*new ideas that work in meeting social goals*” (Mulgan 2007, 8). A broader definition made by Murray et. al (2010, 3) refers to social innovations as new ideas that meet social needs while also creating new social relationships or new ways of collaboration. Compared to business innovations, where the main motivation is economic profit,

social innovations are motivated by social needs. Social innovations are often new ways of combining already existing things and can result in products, services or even in new lifestyles, in which original ways of solving problems are introduced. (Mulgan 2007.) These new ideas are good for society, while simultaneously improving society's capabilities to act for common causes, as they produce new social relationships and new forms of collaboration (Murray et. al 2010, 3). Social innovation is a dynamic process where human capabilities and collaboration are important. Each new social innovation creates a platform which makes it possible for further social innovation processes to emerge. Successful social innovations usually emerge where actors from different sectors within a society come together to collaboratively work towards a common goal. Furthermore, social innovations are often grass-roots initiatives (Augustionsson 2011). Caulier-Gris et al. (2012, 18) have, based on previous research regarding social innovation, made the following core definition: "*Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act.*"

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Within the social learning process towards sustainability, local initiatives will play a significant role. (Manzini & Meroni 2007, p 161). According to Thackara (2005, 86), this is because locality is important for innovations to emerge, as a city can be seen as an area full of knowledge, time and attention, embodied in the people living in the area. Cases of grass-roots social innovation taking place in different parts of Europe were observed within the research project EMUDE – *Emerging user demands for sustainable solutions*, carried out from 2004 to 2006. The cases chosen for observation were considered promising in terms of social and environmental sustainability. These cases are initiatives taken by active people, who have found new ways of dealing with everyday problems. They are for example sharing space and equipment, collaborating to reshape social services to better meet their needs, and are creating new forms of social networks. (Manzini & Meroni 2007.) The groups of people behind these promising initiatives are defined as *Creative Communities* and described as groups of people who are putting into practice original ways of dealing with everyday problems (Manzini & Meroni 2007, 170). The people within these creative communities are acting outside the existing frameworks and are showing the rest of us that it is possible to move away from the dominant idea of wellbeing based on production and consumption, towards a more sustainable form of wellbeing based on social relationships and common goods (Manzini 2007, 237). Many of the examples described within EMUDE are based on reciprocity and trust (Manzini & Meroni 2007). While some level of trust is needed for

collaborative local initiatives to emerge, the collaborative initiatives can themselves foster trust and enable new forms of relationships to emerge.

Focusing on collaborative efforts on a local level does not mean that the global context should be ignored. Manzini (2004, 20-24) describes what he calls *cosmopolitan localism* where the meaning of local in a globalized world is redefined. *Localism* is no longer seen as a phenomenon in isolated places separated from one another, but rather as a sense of place that emerges in locations that are seen as *knots in a network*. Cosmopolitan localism can play an important role in sustainable development. While social forces are gathered on a local level in order to collaborate in handling local issues, the global connection is recognized. (Manzini 2004, 20-24.) It is important to recognize this connection since, as Giddings et al. (2002) note, the global and the local are connected and are constantly interacting with one another. The project carried out in Kannelmäki is based on the idea that local collaboration is important for the social learning process aimed towards sustainability (Manzini eg. 2007, 2009) to emerge.

DESIGN ACTIVISM

Fuad-Luke (2009, 20) has made a preliminary definition of design activism as follows; *“design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change”*. Furthermore he stresses the importance of *counter-narrative*, where design activism presents alternatives to the current paradigm and aims to make a difference in society (Fuad-Luke 2009, 20). Design activism can take various different forms (Fuad-Luke 2009, Thorpe 2011), for instance, projects within *social design* and *design for sustainability* can be seen as forms of design activism. Thorpe (2011, 6) has identified four basic criteria for design as activism; *it reveals or frames an issue, it calls for change based on the issue, it works on behalf of a disadvantaged group and it disrupts current ways of practice*. The extent to which the initiatives carried out in Kannelmäki can be referred to as design activism varies according to the different approaches taken within each exploration. However, the set of explorations calls for change, as proposed in the definitions of design activism above. The project carried out in Kannelmäki revealed local issues and aimed at changing these issues.

The counter-narrative suggested by Fuad-Luke, which resonates with the disruptiveness suggested by Thorpe, is created to a different degree in each of the explorations as they take on slightly different objectives. An overall aim has been that of challenging the public perception of design, which in itself is a form of disruptiveness. Thorpe's criteria for design as activism includes the work on behalf of a disadvantaged group. In this thesis project the residents of Kannelmäki are not considered a disadvantaged group, and neither has the aim been to work on behalf of them. While reflecting upon design activism, Lees-Maffei's (2012, 91) poses the

question whether design activism is something that is done on behalf of a certain group of people, or whether it is something carried out by the people themselves. She suggests that design activism is a grass-roots activity rather than a top-down initiative (Lees-Maffei 2012, 91). In this thesis project design activism is seen as a grass-roots initiative, aimed at involving the concerned people in the process. The aspect of involvement in the design process is relevant with regards to participatory design approaches, which have been referred to as design activism by both Thorpe (2011) and Fuad-Luke (2009).

NEW DESIGN KNOWLEDGE

According to Manzini (2009) the ongoing change towards *“a society that calls itself network and knowledge based”* is turning into a society that is as unsustainable as, or possibly even more unsustainable than the previous one. Therefore the ongoing change should be reoriented towards sustainability. If designers are to have a role in changing the direction of the change in progress, new design knowledge is needed. (Manzini 2009, 4.) Manzini (2009, 12) describes design research as *“an activity aiming at producing knowledge useful to those who design”*, whereas *design knowledge* is the knowledge produced through design research and is represented by *visions, proposals, tools and reflections*. (Manzini 2009, 12.) These kinds of representations are best produced by research through design and often bring with them a certain *level of subjectivity*. Design research is neither scientific, where subjectivity is to be avoided, nor completely artistic, where the research is mostly guided by a subjective dimension. Within the design discipline creativity and subjectivity are combined *with a dose of reflection and arguments on its own choices*. (Manzini 2009, 6.) Manzini (2009, 5) stresses the importance of the design knowledge produced to be *explicit, discussable, transferable and accumulable*. He further explains that the knowledge should be *“clearly expressed by whoever produces it, discussed by anyone who is interested, applied by other designers and should be the starting point that allows other researchers to produce further knowledge”*. The social learning process required for sustainability is generated by and is itself generating new design knowledge (Manzini 2009, 8). As the title of this thesis implies, the aim is to produce new design knowledge through practice-based design research with the aim of contributing to the knowledge needed about how to design in a sustainable way. Within this thesis knowledge about a design process carried out in a local social suburban context is introduced.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the idea of detaching the designer from the traditional notion of design, where designers are mostly concerned with creating consumer products and shaping the physical environment. Design can have an important role within sustainable development if the focus of mainstream design shifts from supporting a product based well-being to that of supporting an actor centred view on wellbeing. Within the actor centred view of wellbeing, people are no longer considered passive consumers who receive finalized products or services, they are instead seen as active contributors in shaping their own everyday lives. When design aims at addressing *real* issues related to the life of the people who will be affected by the design process, the design context becomes complex. Designers are faced with the difficulty of knowing how to address problems that in their nature are both complicated and diffuse. Designers cannot work alone when addressing societal concerns, since they do not have enough knowledge about neither the issues to prioritize, nor how to address the challenges society is faced with. There is a need to consider how best to engage participants in design processes in a way that encourages collaboration, both when deciding on what issues to address, and when envisioning possible alternatives to current situations. The ways of referring to design presented in this chapter, have provided the author with an interest towards participatory design approaches in a local social context.

PARTiCiPATORY DESiGN APPROACHES

The importance of collaboration related to sustainability(...) guided the author towards using participatory design approaches in this thesis project.

5. Participatory design approaches

In the following chapter an overview of participatory design approaches is given in. Furthermore, it is explained why involving people outside the design profession in the design process can be a way to move towards more responsible and sustainable ways of designing.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

There is an increasing interest in participatory design approaches, which most likely relates to the increasing complexity of the problems that we are faced with today (Fuad –Luke 2009, 147). Ehn (2008) describes participatory design (PD) as an approach where users are involved in the design process and where the motivation of involving future users comes from the idea of democracy. Those who will be affected by the design outcome should be given the possibility to make their voice heard within the process. In addition to democracy, involving users in the design process is a way to ensure that the knowledge and skills that exist among the future users are effectively utilized in the design. (Ehn 2008.) Carroll (2006) also describes PD as giving the people who are being designed for “a voice” in the process, while pointing out that PD refers to a wide array of attitudes and techniques. Brandt (2006, 57) describes PD as *active involvement* of both those designed for and other stakeholders within the process. Her view, shared with others within the field of PD, is that one of the cornerstones of designing is *organizing participation*. (Brandt 2006, 57.)

WHAT IS CO-DESIGN?

Co-design is a process where *collaboration* is central (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2011, 11). Co-design is referred to and practiced in many different ways (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2011, Sanders & Stappers 2008). For instance, Szebeko & Tan (2010), who have applied co-design within the healthcare sector, distinguish between co-design and other forms of user involvement. According to them, co-design implies only those design activities where all stakeholders are equally involved in the whole design process. According to Fuad-Luke (2007, 39) there is not one single way for how to co-design, but stakeholder involvement is essential. Co-design can also refer to the setting where the collaborative design activity takes place, the actual gathering (Kankainen et al. 2011). Whereas Vaajakallio (2012, 55) refers to co-design as embracing all the design activities that are based

on the mindset that people are creative if they are provided the opportunity to be so. These design activities include co-design, co-creation and participatory design (Vaajakallio 2012, 55). Sanders & Stappers (2008, 6) use co-design when referring to “*the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process.*” The above mentioned authors agree on this as they write about co-design; they refer to the involvement of people who are not professional designers, and to a creative activity.

TOWARDS EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING

In the Department of Design in Aalto University co-design has been built on *user-centred* and *empathic design* (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2011). Lee (2012, 15) underlines that user-centred and human-centred design are often used in overlapping ways. She refers to user-centred design as the traditional usability approach, including usability engineering and ergonomics. Traditional usability practices were common before contemporary practices, such as empathic design and co-design. Human-centred design embraces both user-centred approaches and contemporary practices. (Lee 2012, 15.) Within empathic design the users are seen as people with feelings, instead of mere test subjects (Mattelmäki & Battarbee 2002, 266). Throughout the last decades there have been different approaches for understanding the users within design. It has been common for the users to be seen as subjects for investigation when quantitative data is gathered (Vaajakallio 2012, 47). Within co-design the attention has moved from seeing the user as a passive contributor towards being an active collaborator in the process, bringing personal expertise and experiences into the design (Sanders & Stappers 2008). This shift has resulted in more creative approaches, where the designers are searching for an *empathic understanding* of people’s experiences by considering their subjective values, attitudes and desires (Vaajakallio 2012, 50).

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN OR CO-DESIGN?

Today many design researchers and designers use the term co-design when describing approaches where those who will be affected by the design are acting as co-designers within the process. According to Sanders & Stappers (2008, 7), what is today described as co-design has existed since the 1970s, but it has been referred to as participatory design. PD emerged in Scandinavian countries in the 1970s when new technology was introduced and there were movements striving towards workplace democracy, by letting the workers contribute in the design of the equipment they were to use (Ehn 2008). Participatory design and co-design tend to be used as synonyms in the Nordic countries, since they both build upon a similar mindset and tools (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2011, 3). Despite the differences in how co-design is used or whether the activity is called co-design or

participatory design, the underlying mindset of these design approaches is central when discussing their nature. Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser (2011, 11) have, while describing a set of rather different ways to apply co-design, identified a similar mindset for the approaches:

- The mindset emphasises that people can contribute to design when their knowledge and expertise is valued and when they are given the possibility to be involved.
- The mindset is based on a belief that the collective activity taking place in co-design creates an *exchange of ideas, collective exploration and learning* that is more valuable than individual reflection.
- The mindset is focused upon exploring and finding *ideas, reasons, problems and opportunities with the goal of change*, rather than understanding a specific phenomenon.

Within this thesis co-design and participatory design are treated as synonyms, as the reason for applying participatory design approaches springs from the mindset and ideology within the field. When referring to the explorations done in Kannelmäki, *participatory design approaches* are used in order to avoid confusion since co-design in certain cases can refer to a particular kind of setting.

CREATIVITY AND CHANGING ROLES

Sanders & Stappers (2008, 9) shed light on the importance of creativity within participatory design approaches. Collaboration with people who are not trained in design requires an attitude based upon the belief that all people are creative, since the process requires creative initiative from the entire team. This can be challenging, especially within business where the majority of decisions made still relies on experts, and those in power oppose drastic changes. In addition, not all people consider themselves to be creative, it can therefore be difficult to involve them in collaborative design processes. (Sanders & Stappers 2008, 9.) But as Sanders (2006a, 28) notes, people are already showing that they do not want to be merely passive consumers, they want to be creators. This can also be seen in collaborative efforts in the online world (see for example Leadbeater, 2009) and in the open design movement (see for example van Abel et al. 2011).

Sanders (2006b) describes the changing field of design and how design is already opening up to the involvement of people. The changes in the design field challenge the roles of both the people who are being designed for and the designers (Sanders 2006a). According to Sanders (2006a) designers should learn how to serve people's creative needs and make use of the expertise found amongst these people, who she refers to as *everyday people*. The everyday people are consid-

ered experts of their own experience and are therefore important contributors in the co-design process. Within more traditional design processes the people being designed for have been referred to as consumers, users or adaptors, depending on their level of participation and creativity. *Everyday people* are seen as co-creators within the design process, where the role of the designer moves towards harnessing the creativity of others. (Sanders 2006a.)

LEVELS OF CREATIVITY

Everyday people are searching for creative experiences, but people are creative to a different extent within different areas of their lives (Sanders 2006a, 29). Sanders (2006a, 29) distinguishes between four different levels of creativity; *doing*, *making*, *adapting* and *creating*. The different levels of creativity can be described by different ways of preparing food. *Doing* can be seen as a productive effort where one accomplishes a simple task of heating a prepared dish. *Making* requires a higher level of creative input and can be compared with the effort of preparing a dish according to a recipe, whereas *adapting* requires the creative effort of adding or changing something in the original recipe. *Creating* can be described as the effort that requires the highest level of creative input out of these four levels of creativity. When one is creating there are no predefined descriptions of how the task should be carried out. When one prepares a dish while making up the recipe the effort can be described as *creating*. (Sanders 2006a, 29.)

WHY ARE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN APPROACHES IMPORTANT IN DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

If design is to move beyond the traditional model of concentrating mainly on products for the market, participatory design approaches are a promising direction. Co-design is often applied outside the field of product design (Vaajakallio 2012, 58) and the activities aim at new directions, ideas and solutions (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2012, 2). Co-design serves as a way to collaboratively explore or share experiences about a certain area of interest (Mattelmäki & Sleeswijk Visser 2011, 2). There are strong links between participatory design approaches and design for social innovation, as social innovation requires the form of multi-stakeholder involvement and collaborative efforts that can be reached through participatory design (for example Hillgren et al. 2011; Manzini & Rizzo 2011). As described in chapter 4, social innovation often leads to sustainable solutions.

The mindset behind Illich's (1973) convivial tools, discussed in the previous chapter, is very close to the mindset of co-design, since both rely on considering people capable of acting if provided with the right tools. Illich (1973) argues that people would be capable of doing much more themselves, instead of relying on institutions, professionals and machines, if given the right tools. In a similar

manner Sanders and Stappers (2008, 12) argue that people can become part of the design team when given tools to express themselves, while Fuad-Luke (2007, 46) points out that co-design can *catalyse conviviality*.

According to Fuad-Luke (2007, 46) co-design processes can produce ideas of how wellbeing needs should be met in sustainable ways. Furthermore design moves away from the market-centred approach as in co-design, the whole society is considered to be the client. He concludes by describing the purpose of co-design as “...the creation of new societal values to balance human happiness with ecological truths”(Fuad-Luke 2007, 47). When involving people in the design process, it becomes a mutual learning process. People outside the design field learn about design, while designers learn about the people being designed for. (Carroll 2006, 15; Fuad-Luke 2007, 38; Lee 2008.) When sustainability is seen as a mutual learning process, as described by Manzini (eg. 2007, 2009), participatory design can serve as a domain where various actors and stakeholders can exchange ideas, collaborate and learn from each other.

THE GOOD ENOUGH DESIGNER

Thorpe & Gamman (2011) draw clear links to both Papanek and Whitley in their article “*Design with society: why socially responsive design is good enough*”. They argue that designers should not and cannot be held responsible for everything that concerns a design process addressing societal issues. They suggest that designers who are addressing the challenge of meeting societal goals in new and sustainable ways should not be considered as *socially responsible* as has been argued by the aforementioned authors, but as socially responsive. The title “*Design with society*” refers to the fact that social responsiveness demands collaboration with various stakeholders during the design process. According to Thorpe and Gamman (2011) designers cannot be held fully responsible when they collaborate with others, but they need to be responsive to the context in which the design activity takes place, and that is good enough. The good enough designer works with the available assets and collaborates with other actors when finding ways to address societal problems (Thorpe & Gamman 2011).

PARTICIPATORY EXPLORATIONS

The importance of collaboration related to sustainability, especially collaboration within the design process aiming at sustainable social innovation, guided the author towards using participatory design approaches in this thesis project. Another important motivation for choosing this direction is that of a mutual learning process among the designers and the people involved in the design process. In addition there are many qualities that enable the designer to move away from the traditional notion of design, in which the designer provides consumers with ready solutions, towards designing with people, where those who will be affected by the design outcome are given the possibility to collaborate in the design process. Throughout the explorations in Kannelmäki the aim with the participatory approach was to search for empathic understanding and inspiration to guide the design process, rather than to actively co-design solutions. However, the mind-set is similar to that of participatory design and co-design. When designing with people the designer should be responsive to the context, therefore the author found it important to better understand the social dimensions of a residential area. That is why concepts from social sciences will be explored in the next chapter.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: CONCEPTS FROM SOCIAL SCIENCES

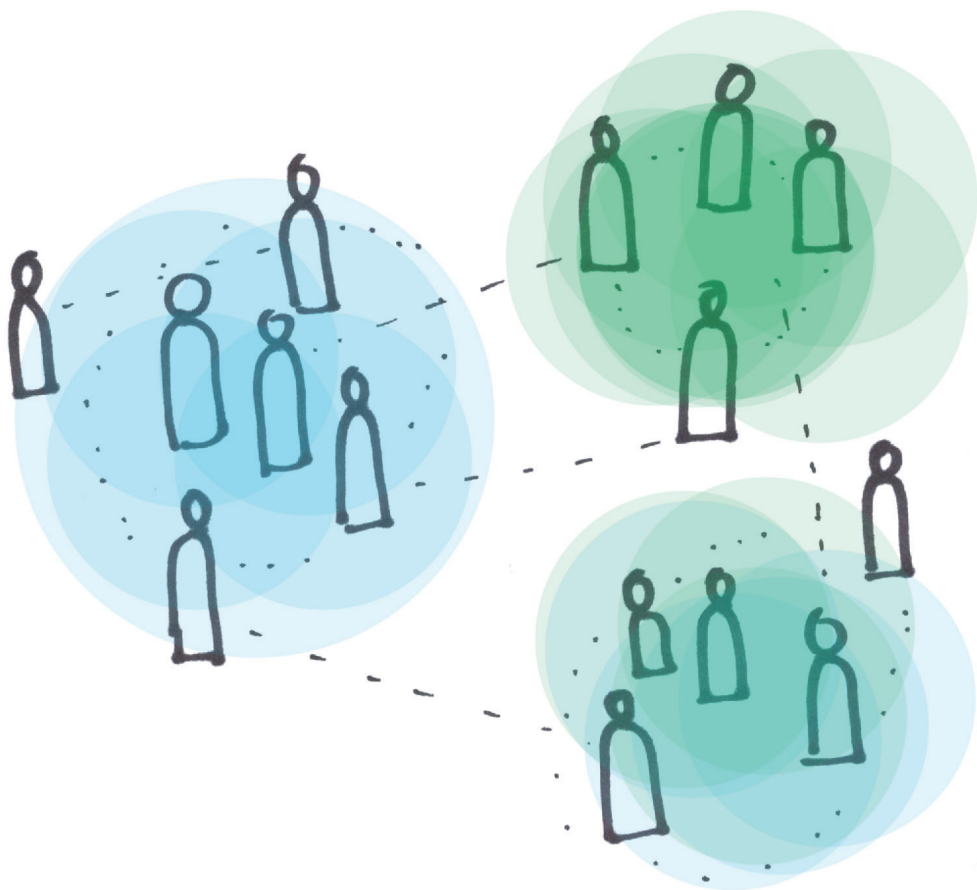


FIGURE 5: SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

6. The social context: concepts from social sciences

Because of the importance of local collaboration in generating sustainable solutions, the concept of community and social capital are explored from the perspective of social sciences. When aiming at carrying out a participatory and collaborative design process in a social context, it is important to understand the ways in which people interact and build relationships. Getting familiar with how social relationships have been studied within the social sciences helped the author to better understand the social context within which the thesis project was carried out. This chapter also aims towards explaining why social relationships are important within a local area.

COMMUNITY

Community is associated to the feeling of belonging, togetherness or to a group of people having certain interests in common. Community can also be linked to a physical environment, such as the neighbourhood. There is no single universal definition of community, but it usually denotes relationships within a group of people, most commonly linked to a certain place (Bruhn 2005, 11). There are similarities in how the word “community” and the word “culture” are being understood and used. These words have both been used very freely and with a presumption that everyone knows what the words mean and that the meanings are considered important. Community has, since it first appeared within the field of sociology, been thought of as an opposite to society, likewise a broad concept. Within the contrast between community and society, community represents a softer side, where the emotional attachment to place and the ideal guidelines for relationships are emphasized. (Bruhn 2005, 29-30.)

SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY

The concept of community within sociology originates from the theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* by Ferdinand Tönnies, first published in 1887 (Bruhn 2005, p 29). *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, are translated as “Community and Civil Society” (Tönnies 2001). *Gemeinschaft* refers to the kind of social co-existence that is “*familiar, comfortable and exclusive*” while *Gesellschaft* refers to “*the life in the public sphere, in the outside world*” (Tönnies 2001, 18). *Gemeinschaft* includes social relationships such as families, villages or other closely bound groups of people who are tied together by nature, or by a common concern and have a strong sense

of togetherness. Gesellschaft describes a competitive attitude where all individual actions, also those affecting others in the group, are based on self-interest (Tönnies 2001.) Both of the concepts refer to a group of people, but within Gemeinschaft these people “*stay together in spite of everything that separates them*” while in Gesellschaft they “*remain separate spite of everything that unites them*” (Tönnies 2001, 52). Within Tönnies’ theory the concepts of community and society are seen as opposites, but the theory can also be seen as a way of simplifying and describing the different nature of relationships a person may have within the different groups he or she belongs to. Within the described theory the relationships between people are either based on interaction through the individuals’ self-interest or based on an interest in the common good. Most groups of people consist of relationships where these qualities co-exist and overlap.

Since community was introduced by Tönnies in 1887, it has been referred to in a variety of ways within sociology. According to Gusfield (1975) there are two major ways of using the term. The first is the “*territorial*”, where the concept is bound to a location, such as the town, the village or the neighbourhood. The second is “*relational*”, where the concept refers to the quality of the relationships among people in a certain group, without taking the location into consideration. He adds that these two major usages are not always considered separate. (Gusfield 1975.) Hillery (1955) analysed 94 different definitions of community and found that despite the various characteristics the majority of the definitions include an area, common ties and social interaction. Wilkinson (1991) gives a similar description referring to sociological definitions where “*interpersonal bonds such as shared territory, a common life, collective actions and mutual identity*” are emphasized and underlines the importance of social interaction (Wilkinson 1991, 13). Bridger & Luloff (1999) also describe community as a concept that depends upon social interaction. Not all communities are bound to a specific place, some can exist in the online world or around a certain area of interest where the location is of lesser importance. Within this thesis community is considered both as a territorial concept, referring to the area of Kannelmäki, and as a relational concept, where the quality of the relationships among the residents and the way in which the residents interact with each other are considered. The aspect of neighbourhood and the sense of community are present in the way the word community is referred to within this thesis.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

McMillan & Chavis’ (1986) definition of the sense of community, which applies both to the relational and territorial community, entails four elements. The first is *membership* and refers to the feeling of belonging. The second, *influence*, relates to the degree to which the member has influence on the group and to the extent the group has influence on its members. This is a question of considering the group

important for oneself and having the feeling that one's presence in the group matters. The third, *integration and fulfilment of needs*, is linked to the balance between what the members contribute to the group and what they receive in return. The fourth element, *shared emotional connection*, is created through the common experiences the members of the group have had and will have in the future, which can stem from the time that they have spent together, common places or the shared history of the group. (McMillan & Chavis 1986, 3-4.) To summarize this definition McMillan & Chavis (1986, 4) suggest a definition of the sense of community by McMillan (1976) : "*Sense of community is a feeling that members have of feeling of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through commitment to be together.*"

SOCIAL COHESION

Within a cohesive society "*all the component parts somehow fit in and contribute to society's collective project and well-being*" (Kearns & Forrest 2000, 996). Kearns & Forrest (2000) explore the concept of social cohesion through different dimensions that affect the cohesion of a society, including *common values and a civic culture, social order and social control, social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities, social networks and social capital and territorial belonging and identity*. All of these dimensions are interlinked and influence each other (Kearns & Forrest 2000). Among the dimensions central to social cohesion noted by Kearns and Forrest, this thesis focuses mainly on social networks and social capital. Forrest & Kearns (2001) note that a socially cohesive community depends upon the quality of social capital among people. Social cohesion is about getting on in everyday life, a simple measure could be a group of people getting together to defend a common local interest. (Forrest & Kearns, 2001.)

SOCIAL CAPITAL

"*Relationships matter*", are the two words chosen by Field (2003, 1) to summarize the main ideas in the theory of social capital, whereas Porritt (2005, 151) chooses to describe social capital as "*the 'social glue' that keeps things bound together*". Social capital exists in the relationships between people, and one form of social capital can be transformed and appropriated into other forms of social capital when needed. (Coleman, 1988.) As with any form of capital, social capital is not important for its own sake, but for what one does with it (Forrest & Kearns 2001). Field (2003, 1) explains that people are able to accomplish things by working together with others when it would be either hard or impossible to carry out their intent alone. Collaboration requires connections with other people, and these connections are created through different social networks, where members of the networks share common values. The intangible resources found within a social network can be referred to

as social capital. (Field 2003, 1.) Social capital is a rather new concept and has been debated and defined in various ways in recent years. Despite the novelty of the concept, the idea that social ties are important for how the community functions was considered among sociologists before the recent debate about social capital commenced. (Field 2003, 13.)

According to Field (2003) Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam are the three authors that are seen to have had the most influence on the discussion regarding social capital. There are differences, but also similarities in how the concept is seen among these three authors. Bourdieu is concerned with the unequal access to resources and finds social capital an asset among the elite. Coleman considers the relationship between human capital (individual resources) and social capital (common resources) and is interested in how social capital can serve an individual's interests. For Coleman human action is mainly based on self-interest. Putnam's contribution can be seen as the reason for the wider attention the concept has gained, he stresses the importance of associational activity and civic engagement for the wellbeing of the individual and the functioning of society. Despite the differences in how these three consider the concept, they all describe social capital as consisting of social contacts and interaction, while seeing networks and relationships as resources. (Field 2003, 13-43.)

BRIDGING, BONDING AND LINKING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Putnam (2000, 22-24) distinguishes between two different types of social capital, *bridging* and *bonding*. Bonding social capital can be described as inward looking or exclusive, it reinforces solidarity among a limited group of people. Social capital is not only linked to positive outcomes, in some cases it is a positive resource for those within the group, but a negative aspect for people who are not part of the group. This can be the case with bonding social capital. The worst examples of the negative effects of close social relations are linked to extremist groups, where the social ties enable groups to carry out actions which can be extremely damaging for those who are not part of the group. Bridging social capital refers to outward looking, inclusive forms of social relations, where people from different groups come together and the social network becomes more diverse. Combining different kinds of knowledge or resources, can lead towards remarkable development where diverse social groups can benefit from the collaboration. These forms of social capital should not be considered as either-or, but rather more or less, as many social groups might bridge according to certain dimensions and bond according to other. (Putnam 2000, 22-24.) A third type, *linking* social capital has been identified in addition to bonding and bridging. Linking social capital refers to social connections among groups with different status, power and influence in society. (Porritt 2005, 153.)

Within this thesis social capital is explored in the context of neighbourhood, although, as noted by Forrest & Kearns (2001), a neighbourhood is not the only context for social capital. The concept is referred to as a positive resource, as the interest towards social capital within this thesis project lies within bridging and linking social capital. This is because social innovations usually emerge when actors from different sectors come together to collaboratively work towards a common goal (Augustinsson 2011). The possibility of cohesive groups to have a negative impact on those outside the group is most likely in the cases of bridging social capital. According to Field (2008, 132-156) social capital cannot easily be measured nor created, despite various attempts to do so. However, people can be brought together and it can be ensured that there are conditions for collaboration to emerge (Field 2008, 154). In this thesis, *how* design can contribute to bringing people together is explored, rather than surmising if, or how much social capital is created through the conducted explorations. Social capital is seen as a concept that helps to clarify why and what kind of social relationships are important within the development of a suburban living area.

WHY IS SOCIAL CAPITAL IMPORTANT?

Research on the benefits related to social capital has been conducted in a wide variety of disciplines, with the common idea of social relationships as a resource. It has been shown that social networks can have a positive impact on a person's educational achievements. Social relations have been considered important within economics and it has been shown that crime rates increase as a result of a sudden loss of social capital. (Field 2003, 48-69.) Among the research related to benefits of social capital Field also (2003, 63-72) includes wellbeing and health in addition to trust and reciprocity. Porritt (2005, 151-152) notes that social relationships can have many practical benefits to the people within the network. People can give each other support both in terms of helping with practical matters, borrowing each other's belongings or sharing knowledge and know-how among each other. (Porritt 2005, 151-152.) Sharing resources can result in smaller consumption of natural capital (environmental resources). Natural capital usually wears out while being consumed, while social capital usually grows the more it is used. (Roseland 2000.) In addition, social networks nurture collaboration between people. When a society is cohesive, its capacity to collaboratively tackle challenges is stronger than within a socially fragmented society. (Porritt 2005, 152.) Social capital can be seen as both a private and public asset, as social resources can serve the individual and the common good (Putnam 2000, 22).

SOCIAL WELLBEING

The social dimension of wellbeing is included as one of the aspects within the definition of wellbeing proposed by Dodge et al. (2012, 230) described in chapter 3. According to Keyes (1998) social wellbeing is an important aspect in understanding wellbeing, as individuals are embedded in social structures and communities. Keyes (1998, 122) defines social wellbeing as *“the appraisal of one’s circumstance and functioning in society”*. Social wellbeing can similarly be described as *“people’s experiences of supportive relationships and sense of trust and belonging with others”* (Michaelson et al. 2009, 4). Keyes (1998) proposes a model of five dimensions of social wellbeing, including *social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualization* and *social acceptance*. In two studies concerning the different dimensions of social wellbeing the findings show that feelings of social integration and social contribution are higher among people who have recently been involved in their communities than among those who have never been involved. The studies also show that social integration is stronger among those who have a positive perception about their neighbourhood, and those who feel close to others show a feeling of security towards their neighbourhood. The *good life* can have many different meanings and is constructed both in the private and public domain, with only some of the factors relating to wellbeing being considered within the five-dimensions model of social wellbeing. (Keyes 1998.)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Similar to sustainable development and community having different meanings in different contexts, the concept of community development is also varied. The community development foundation describes community development as *“...a set of approaches undertaken by individuals, informal groups and organisations”*. In community development people and community groups are encouraged to articulate their needs and take action to address them. (CDF n.d.) In the approach taken in the explorations, the assets within the area of Kannelmäki are considered important. Arefi (2008, 2-3) explains how the asset-based community development approaches move from focusing on the needs of a community, to focusing on strengthening assets that already exist in the community. Community assets include tangible and intangible assets, such as physical, economic, political, human and social capital. (Arefi 2008, 2-3.)

Sustainable community development is described by Bridger & Luloff (1999) as sustainable development on a local level. They argue that the transition towards sustainability on a local level is more probable than on a larger scale, since the concept of sustainable development thus moves from being an abstract macro-level hard-to-grasp concept towards being concrete and visible in daily life. (Bridger & Luloff 1999.) The way in which community is referred to naturally affects the

way in which community development is understood. As community in this thesis is seen as both a territorial and a relational aspect, community development is referred to as collaboration among the residents of an area. The goal with the collaboration is to address issues concerning the area in a sustainable way, while strengthening the cohesion by working together. Even though the first step a community should take when starting a local development process is to recognize itself as a resource, there are situations where the community is born because there is a project that needs to be undertaken collaboratively (Manzini 2004, 22-24). Community development is a generative process where the issues to be addressed in the local context are dependent on a certain level of social cohesion, whereas it is exactly the local development projects that may strengthen the community cohesion. Community development is concerned with addressing local issues collaboratively and with building a more cohesive community through local collaboration.

DESIGNING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

When design aims to contribute to sustainable development, in the form of creating sustainable wellbeing, the context for design becomes more complex than when designing a product for the marketplace. Thackara (2005, 211-226) identifies seven design frameworks for how to design in a complex world with a constant flow. Each framework consists of a contrast between how traditional design is carried through to how what Thackara refers to as the *new design approach* should be carried through. The frameworks outlined by Thackara (2005, 211-226) are the following³:

- FROM BLUEPRINT AND PLAN TO SENSE AND RESPOND.
- FROM HIGH CONTEXT TO DEEP CONTEXT.
- FROM TOP-DOWN TO SEEDING EDGE EFFECT.
- FROM BLANK SHEET OF PAPER TO SMART RECOMBINATION.
- FROM SCIENCE FICTION TO SOCIAL FICTION.
- FROM DESIGNING FOR TO DESIGNING WITH.
- FROM DESIGNING AS PROJECT TO DESIGNING AS SERVICE.

These frameworks have influenced the author, and they can be seen as a response to how designers should work in order to create a meaningful contribution to sustainable development. These frameworks have within the explorations carried out, been appropriated into a local social context. Those who design within the design approach described by Thackara (2005, 226) are not only professional designers, since he considers everyone to be potential designers.

³ A short description of each framework can be found in Appendix 1, page 166

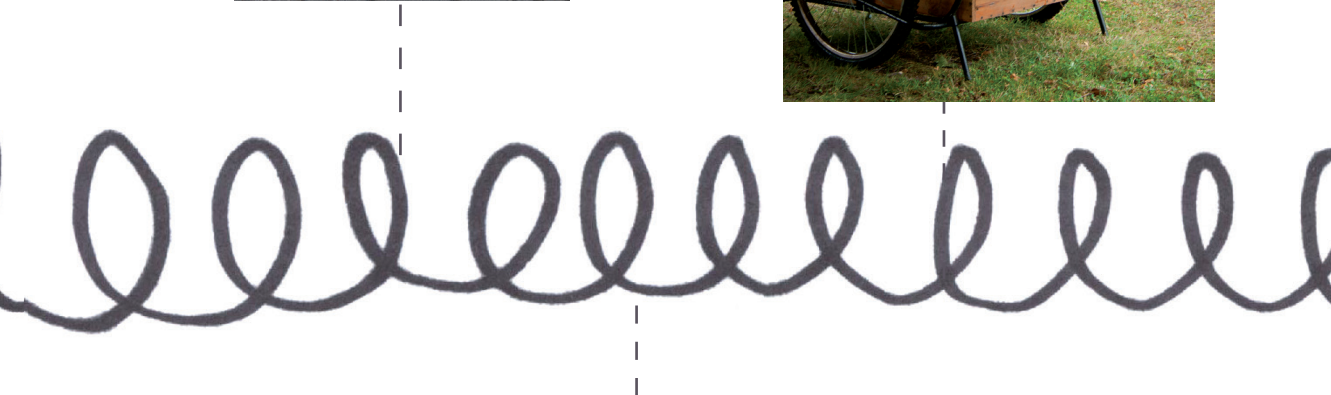
EXPLORATIONS

October 2011



FIGURE 6: OVERVIEW OF THE EXPLORATIONS CARRIED OUT IN KANNELMÄKI. THE CURVE ILLUSTRATES THE NATURE OF THE PROCESS THAT WAS RATHER GENERIC THAN LINEAR.

August 2012





7. Explorations

The author's first visit to Kannelmäki was at the end of August 2011. The more active phase of getting to know the area started in October 2011. The series of initiatives, referred to as *explorations*, described within this chapter were carried out between October 2011 and August 2012. Each exploration forms a step in the process aimed at exploring the area and the residents' perceptions of it, while also exploring how to connect with the community when aiming at a local social design process. Another objective has been that of exploring *designerly* ways of creating new social connections among the residents, and as ways for new forms of collaboration to emerge in the area. The research questions stated within the introduction are explored throughout the process.

A wide range of people have been involved in the explorations. The participation of the residents of Kannelmäki in the explorations has been crucial in carrying out the process. Sanders' (2006a) notion of *everyday people* is borrowed and the residents of Kannelmäki are thought of as *everyday people who are experts of their experiences*, and that is why they were involved in the design process. The aim was to generate an *empathic understanding* towards the residents of Kannelmäki. Within most of the explorations there have been other students or staff from Aalto University involved in addition to the author. The people involved in organizing the described initiatives are mentioned in the beginning of each exploration described.

HELSINKI SUBURBS

Kortteinen (1980) explains how the amount of residents in Helsinki almost doubled between the years 1950-1972, when a growing amount of people moved from the countryside to the city as an effect of industrialisation. The suburbs were built in order to rapidly respond to the need for housing. The suburban areas with their concrete buildings soon got their specific image and the areas were widely criticized. In many cases everyone seems to know what one means when mentioning the problems related to the suburbs, despite the fact that many suburban residents do not consider their living areas to be problematic. (Kortteinen 1980.) Currently the many attitudes related to suburban living, especially among people who do not themselves live in suburban areas, resemble those described by Kortteinen, more than 30 years ago. The problems related both to the attitudes towards suburban areas and the liveability in the areas, have been recognized and addressed through various projects in recent years. Santaoja (2013) describes one notable project *Lähiö projekti*, the suburban project, managed by the city of Helsinki, which is

focusing on how to create diverse and liveable suburban areas. Within the project, renovation efforts, cultural activities and citizen participation are focused upon. (Santaoja 2013.)

KANNELMÄKI

Kannelmäki is situated in the Kaarela region of Helsinki, and is the oldest suburb in this area. Kaarela was complete countryside until the end of the 1950s when the construction of Kannelmäki begun. At the end of the 1970s the construction of the railway going from the city centre, through Kannelmäki towards Vantaa, was finished and the amount of residents in Kannelmäki doubled in only a few years. (Tikkanen & Selander 2011, 72.) Today Kannelmäki can be reached by frequent train connection from the city centre in 15 minutes. The buildings in Kannelmäki consist out of houses built mostly in the 50s and the 70s, there are both detached and block buildings in the area. Services such as schools, day-care centres, service houses, a youth centre, a health care centre and a cultural centre can be found in the area (Service Map, n.d.).

GRASS-ROOTS INITIATIVES IN HELSINKI

In recent years there has been an emerging culture of grass-roots initiatives in Helsinki where residents organize block-parties, pop-up restaurants and flea markets as a way to improve their living environment and create new connections within their neighbourhood (Hernberg 2012). These positive initiatives, where local resources are highlighted, are promising cases of how people can improve their living environment within the already existing frameworks by new forms of collaboration on a local level. These positive examples have motivated and inspired the author to explore how a designer can have a role in catalysing similar initiatives. Currently grass-roots initiatives happen mostly in the city centre of Helsinki and the most active ones behind these initiatives are young adults working within the creative field. However, local resources in the suburbs can be highlighted in similar ways and new forms of collaboration can be encouraged. Finding out how a designer can encourage people of different age groups and various backgrounds living in the suburbs to more actively be involved in affecting their living environment, and to create their own initiatives where the liveability is improved, needs to be explored.



METHOD USED IN THE EXPLORATIONS

The research method used in the explorations is *qualitative*, more explicitly *exploratory*, *practice-based design research*. *Qualitative research* is a wider area embracing a large set of different methods, *exploratory* defines the nature of the *practice-based research*. In the following section the key characteristics of these methods are first described and then the choice of method is justified.

Hirsjärvi et al. (1997, 161) explain that the aim of *qualitative research* is to describe real life, based on an understanding of reality as a varied concept. Data is typically collected from real situations and people are used as the major instrument for data gathering. One characteristic within qualitative research is that of planning the research process as the research goes about. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 161.) Within *exploratory design research*, a form of qualitative research, activities are focused on understanding the world of the people who are targeted by the design. Interest areas are, for example, daily life routines, challenges, needs and desires. (Martin & Hanington 2012, 84.) All research where creative work is carried out for specific research purposes can be described as *practice-based research*. It is a way to generate new data through *experiential activity* (Gray & Malins 2004, 104-105).

Ideals and theories about how design and designers should change direction are, as Manzini (2009, 9) states, easy to think and talk about, but not necessarily as easy to implement. This is why new design knowledge is needed (Manzini 2009, 9). An *exploratory practice-based research method* was chosen since the aim of this research process was to investigate how design in a local social context could be carried out in practice. According to Gray and Malins (2004, 25) practice-based research in art and design is done in areas which are large and complex, and where several researchers' experiences are needed in order to understand the whole. The author chose to explore the area of participatory design approaches in a local social context, aware of only being able to produce a limited amount of knowledge, but thinking of this contribution as a part of a bigger context. Previously produced knowledge is here built upon, while other designers can benefit from the knowledge produced here, and continue the research in different directions.

The choice of method as well as the research plan has been based on a sum of different opportunities and intuitive reasoning. The specific methods used within the explorations will be explained in more detail with each exploration. The explorations are inspired by co-design methods used both in service design, and product development. Each exploration aims to involve the residents of Kannelmäki, but the level of participation in each exploration differs according to the method.

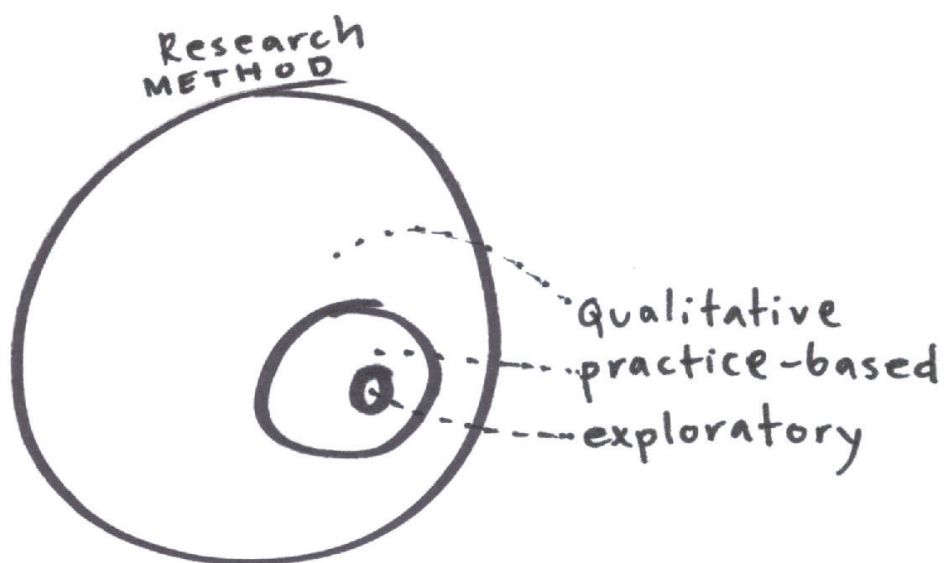


FIGURE 7: RESEARCH METHOD VISUALIZED.

Kanneltie
Kantelevägen

Vad
tycker
du
om
Gamlas?

Mitä
mieltä
olet
Kannelmäestä?

Exploration 1: First impressions

October - November 2011

During the first exploration the author worked together with Aslihan Oguz, also a student of the Creative Sustainability program at Aalto University. Oguz was involved in the beginning of the Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood -project. When referring to “the research team” in this section, the author refers to Oguz and herself.

THE PREFERRED LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Kannelmäki has many traits in common with other suburban areas in the Helsinki region, providing basic services for the residents, having easy access by public transportation to the city centre and being located close to green areas. In a survey among residents in Helsinki, presented by Kortteinen et al. (2005) aspects which are important within the residents' living environment and aspects that could affect their willingness to move elsewhere, were investigated. Living in detached houses was the preferred way of living among a majority of the respondents. Tranquillity, good transportation connections, good recreation possibilities, the beauty of the area and the proximity to nature, good commercial services as well as the reputation and appreciation of the area, were listed as the five most important aspects. (Kortteinen et al. 2005). Similar to many other suburban areas, there tends to be a negative reputation linked to the area of Kannelmäki, which in many cases is related to how the area is presented in the media. Suburban areas in the Helsinki region are mostly talked about when something negative happens, and an impression of being far more restless than perceived among the area's residents is easily given. The aspects that could affect the reason for wanting to move, were within the survey strongly tied to social issues in the current living area, such as restlessness and perceived feeling of insecurity (Kortteinen et al. 2005). The coherence of a neighbourhood depends on a continuous interaction between the social characteristics of the people living there and the external opinions of the area. The external perceptions influence the behaviours and attitudes of the residents, which continuously influence the reputation of the area. (Kearns & Forrest 2000, 1013.)

PURPOSE

In the beginning of the design process the aim was to get a first impression of Kannelmäki, its strengths and weaknesses, and create initial connections with the local residents. Having some background information about the area and about the aspects that people living in Helsinki value in their living environment, there was a need to find out more about Kannelmäki, in order to get started with the process. From the very beginning of the process one main goal for the research team was to get to know the residents' opinions about the area, rather than simply draw conclusions themselves about what it might be like to live in Kannelmäki. Another objective was to let people living in the area know that a project concerning their living environment was about to start, since the team aimed to involve residents in the process.

METHOD

The first and very natural step when concerned with a specific area was to simply visit the area and find out more about the place and about what the residents think of their living environment. The process was started by visiting and walking around in the area, taking pictures and making notes about what was encountered. This was a way to get to know both the physical structure and to get a first impression of the atmosphere of Kannelmäki. After a few visits the research team approached people in the streets, and asked simple questions such as *“Do you like living in Kannelmäki?”*, *“What are the good and bad sides in the area?”* and *“How would you describe Kannelmäki for someone who has never visited the place before?”* In order to attract peoples' attention and to show the residents that someone is currently trying to find out their opinions about the area, notes with questions similar to the above mentioned *“What do you think about Kannelmäki?”* and *“Is Kannelmäki a good place to live in?”* were put up around the area.

During the first exploration different resources within the area were mapped. This was done in order to know what already exists, and in order to find channels through which it would be possible to reach the local residents. Some of the resources, such as local associations, seemed to be possible collaborators later on in the process. Kannelmäki had been one of the target areas in a community development project called Caddies, which was mainly carried out during the year 2010 (Caddies ca. 2010). During a meeting with the coordinator of the project, information about previous initiatives in the area, in addition to a contact list of services and organizations found in Kannelmäki, was provided. As advised by the Caddies' project coordinator, certain active individuals in the area were contacted in order to get more information about local organizations and initiatives. Active local individuals can be referred to as *key people*, these individuals can be seen as important nodes in a social network and usually know how things in the area

work. During meetings with a few local key people their personal opinions about the area were solicited, in addition to further information about different initiatives taken within the area. These people also told general things about the area, such as where people meet each other and what the most important information channels in the area are.

FINDINGS

The residents describe the area as being divided into two main parts, “*old Kannelmäki*” and “*new Kannelmäki*” with the division of the area made by the railway. The new part is on the same side of the railway as the square Sitratori and there are block buildings built mostly in the 70s and later. There are city rental apartments and student apartments located on the new side. According to some residents’, people tend to live in this area only for a limited amount of time, whereas in the old area people live in the same place longer. On the old side of Kannelmäki, the block buildings have been built mostly in the 50s and most of the detached houses in the area are found here. There is an old mall on the old side of Kannelmäki, although most of the services have moved from there to the large and recently renovated shopping center called Prisma. Today there are mostly bars and a few small grocery stores left in the old mall.

The residents of Kannelmäki, whose opinions about their living environment were solicited, seemed mostly satisfied. They said that they have the services they need in their daily life close to where they live, that they are able to easily access the city centre by train and bus, and most of the people emphasized the importance of the green areas found in Kannelmäki. The survey presented by Kortteinen et al. (2005) regarding preferences in living areas among residents of Helsinki, showed similar results, in which people find the services in the area and the proximity to nature important. The majority of those the research team spoke with mentioned restlessness in certain parts of the area, especially around Sitratori and the railway station, in some way during the discussion. They described this as an unpleasant characteristic of Kannelmäki. This is important to take into account, since reasons for wanting to move from one’s current living environment are, according to the survey presented by Kortteinen et. al. (2005), related to questions of perceived safety and social issues.

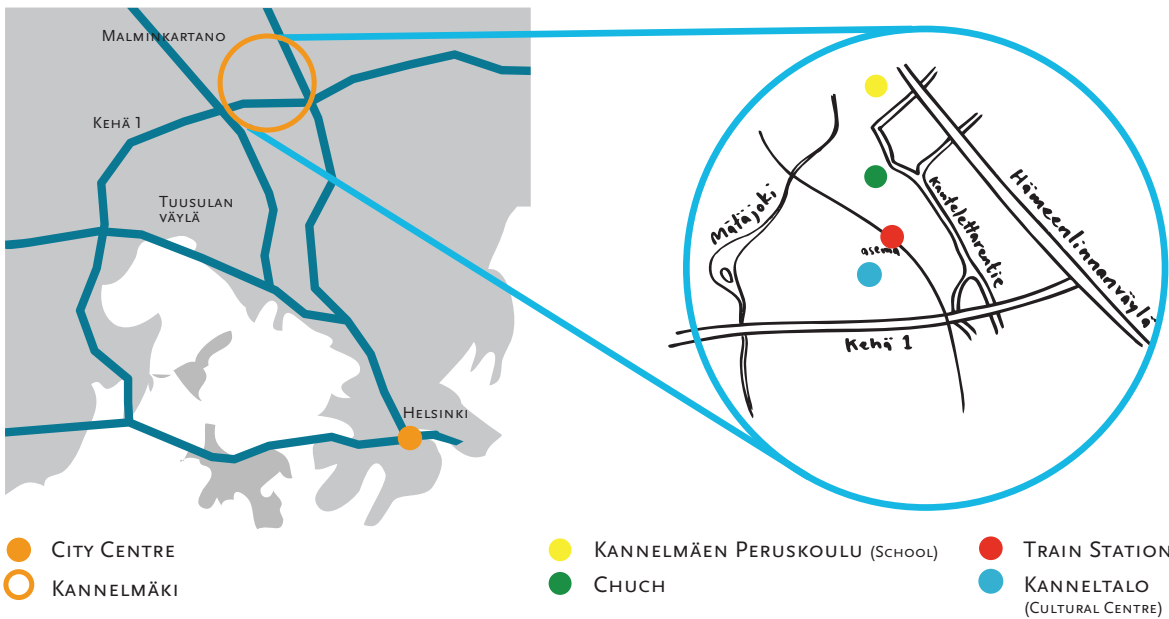
When starting the process Kannelmäki was an unfamiliar area to the research team, even though it in many ways resembles many other suburban areas in the Helsinki region. When arriving to Kannelmäki by train, the first thing one encounters is the square called Sitratori, surrounded by block buildings, two shops, a flea market, several small bars and the cultural centre. The cultural centre Kanneltalo is a great resource in the area. In addition to the cultural centre there is a library, an adult education centre, a café, and a youth centre in the same building. Next to Kanneltalo is a building with empty office spaces. During the observation





phase the research team was told that there had been an initiative taken by a group of local residents to create a community house in the empty space. They had envisioned a space where local organizations could have their offices with a space open for anyone, that would serve as a living room and where events could be hosted. So far, unfortunately, the initiative had not received financial support from the city of Helsinki. The quest for a community house within the area reoccurred several times throughout the series of explorations.

FIGURE 8: MAP OF KANNELMÄKI.



REFLECTION

By walking around and observing the surroundings at different times of the day, it was quite easy to get a feel about the atmosphere of the area, in addition to where different services are situated, and where the places that residents visit can be found. Listening to the residents' opinions was a way to understand what kinds of problems and advantages there are within the area. Posing simple questions in the streets was an easy way to make the first encounter with the residents. It did not require too much preparation, and in some cases the short questions led to valuable discussions. However, coming from the outside and asking questions about the area seemed to give many residents the impression that the inquiries were due to a certain kind of predefined image about the area. As mentioned earlier, many suburban areas in Helsinki have a negative reputation. Those who were approached in the streets seemed aware of the fact that Kannelmäki is not always regarded as a desirable area among people living in other parts of Helsinki. In many cases it seemed that they wanted to reassure that those living in the area are mostly satisfied. Many of the residents who were approached by the research team wanted to give as positive an image as possible. Only a few people seemed to have been waiting for someone to ask for their opinions in order to have the chance to talk about the things they do not appreciate.

Turning up spontaneously and posing questions about the area seemed to cause some confusion among those who were approached. There was a need for an explanation of why the research team was interested in the area and what the project in question was about. This was quite challenging since the intention was that the information gathered throughout the process would guide the process further. A short explanation that the team was studying at the Department of Design in Aalto University and was involved in a project related to Kannelmäki was enough for most of the respondents. There were also those who wanted to know in greater detail what the goals for the project were. To these people the team honestly explained that they were, at that point, only trying to get to know the area, and that the nature of the project would shape according to what was found out.

The question notes, which were put up in the area to attract people's attention, served as a bridge between the passers-by and the research team. When people saw the team attaching these notes, it was more natural for the team to approach them and pose the same questions. There were also people who approached the team and were curious about what they were doing. Throughout the latter phases of the process there were several occasions when people referred to the notes, telling that they had seen the notes and asked whether the notes were related to the *Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood* -project. This proved that the notes had served as a way to attract people's attention, both immediately, as a bridge between the passers-by and the team, and as a message to let people know that something was currently going on in the area.

The information provided through the Caddies project was very beneficial for the continuation of the process. The contact list provided was used when setting up events during the process and the active individuals provided valuable information about the area. One of the people met had been involved in developing a local webpage for Kannelmäki during the Caddies project and was now the editor for the local webpage. Throughout the process the events organized were advertised on the local webpage. In addition, other key people were involved and consulted throughout the series of explorations, in various ways.

SYNTHESIS

At the beginning of the first exploration the research team only knew very few things about Kannelmäki, such as where it is situated, how it can be accessed and the time the area originates from. In order to find out more, a first impression of the area was formed by simply going there and exploring. The first impression was formed both based on being present and observing the surroundings and by approaching the residents. People on the streets and active individuals were engaged with in conversation. These conversations gave insight into how the area is perceived by its residents. The conversations were useful, but as mentioned above, at times it seemed that people thought that the team was looking for problems to be found in the area. This resulted in an impression that the residents wanted to protect their living environment by mostly telling the team positive things about the area.

Being present in the area in addition to approaching people can be a good start when designing in a local social context. However, in order to get a more profound understanding about the residents' perceptions of their neighbourhood, more than simple questions to passers-by is needed. During the first exploration it became clear that most of the people living in Kannelmäki are satisfied with the basic infrastructure in the area, but there are shortcomings in how well people feel at ease in all the parts of the area. Based on what was found out, the research team decided to explore further how the residents relate to their living environment, and what the concept of neighbourhood means to them.

SYÖ
&
KERRO

AIKA

Ravintola Päivä 19.11 klo 11-15

PAIKKA

Kanneltalon kahvila Klaneettitie 5

TARKOITUS

Kerro nykyisestä ja unelma naapurustosta

RUOKA

Kodikas keittolounas 5e



TERVETULOA

Exploration 2: Syö & Kerro

FINDING OUT RESIDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Event 19.II.2011

The Syö & Kerro event was planned and carried through by Aslihan Oguz and the author. They collaborated with café Voilá in the cultural centre of Kannelmäki. During the event they were supported by doctoral students Tatu Marttila and Tjihien Liao, design student Anja-Lisa Hirscher and architect student Niamh Ní Mhóráin from Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. In this chapter “the research team” refers to Aslihan Oguz and the author.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AS SOCIAL SYSTEMS

There is no single way to describe or interpret the word neighbourhood, it serves a set of different functions and varies in meaning according to individual needs and expectations. Certain urban settings provide certain functions for its residents. (Kearns & Parkinson, 2001.) According to Richardson & Mumford (2002) neighbourhoods are forms of social systems, sometimes described as communities, and can be evaluated through their social infrastructure. Social infrastructure in a neighbourhood is made up of the services and facilities, as well as the social organization in that particular area. In other words the social infrastructure consists of people and place. These features both affect each other and are important in making up feasible neighbourhoods. (Richardson & Mumford, 2002.) Forrest & Kerans (2001) note that while many aspects of social life are being transformed, so too is the role of the neighbourhood. Certain activities that used to be carried out in the neighbourhood are now being done in the home or in places that are not part of the immediate neighbourhood. It is therefore suggested by Forrest & Kearns (2001) that the neighbourhood becomes more important for social purposes and its role for recreation and leisure increases. They further suggest that the neighbourhood may take a greater role as a source of comfort and security through social interaction and familiar landmarks. In addition, the neighbourhood plays an important role in shaping a person's identity. Yet there are of course many other venues in addition to the neighbourhood where people socialize and shape their identity. (Forrest & Kearns 2001.)

PURPOSE

Exploration 1 gave the research team a first impression of Kannelmäki. Choosing a direction for the project required a more profound understanding about the residents' attitudes and expectations towards their neighbourhood. The research team wanted to engage with the local residents and get an insight to what their view of an ideal neighbourhood would be, while simultaneously learning more about the residents' perceptions of their current living environment. During the discussions with people on the streets during *Exploration 1*, the research team gained useful information. However, in comparison to the conversations they had with certain active individuals during pre-arranged meetings, there was a difference in the amount and depth of the information gained. The research team wanted to arrange a setting where they could have longer discussions with the residents, and where anyone interested was welcome to take part.

THE EVENT: SYÖ & KERRO

An open event which was called *Syö & Kerro*, "Eat & Tell", dealing with the topic neighbourhood was organised. During the event the research team was going to interview residents while soup was served. The event was set up during Restaurant Day, which is a food carnival where anyone can set up a restaurant for one day (Restaurant Day, n.d.). Restaurant day is a public event that first occurred in May 2011 with rapid popularity, and has since been organized several times. The food carnival is one example of emerging grass-roots initiatives in Helsinki, where residents of the city are involved in initiatives where their own living environment is affected in a fun and easy way.

EVENT SET-UP:

When setting up the event, issues such as the location, the timing, distribution of information prior to the event and how the attitudes and opinions would be gathered during the event needed to be planned carefully. The event was set up in the café of Kanneltalo, the cultural centre of Kannelmäki, since this place had already become familiar to the research team and since they knew that it is a place frequently visited by a wide variety of people. Information about the event was distributed via posters and flyers, through the local webpage and invitations were sent to local associations.



STORYTELLING:

Directed storytelling allows designers to gain information about the participants' experiences in a short amount of time. The storytelling starts with a prompt from the person gathering the data, and ideally the data should lead directly towards design decisions (Martin & Hanington 2012, 68). Gray & Malins (2004, 9) state that stories are powerful and memorable means of making sense of the world. While describing a co-design method called *Storytelling Group* Kankainen et al. (2011) argues that storytelling can encourage participants to envision a dream situation.

EVENT & METHODS:

During the event the visitors of the café were asked to participate in a *directed storytelling* session regarding the topic neighbourhood. The session was called *interview* as people were asked to participate, since the research team thought that this term is more familiar to them. The prompts used within the interviews were questions in addition to pictures, which were used to facilitate the storytelling. The method used during this event differs from the *Storytelling Group* in that the stories were told individually, and not used as a way to design solutions together with the participants. Directed storytelling was used as a way to gather insight in the residents' experiences and dreams in order to form an *empathic understanding* based on the residents' stories. The data gathered through the stories was analysed qualitatively and was used as a way to move the process further.

The main questions in the interview were the following;

1. *How would you describe the word neighbourhood?*
2. *Can you choose the picture that best describes, or that you associate with your ideal neighbourhood?*
3. *Can you choose one picture that describes, or that you associate with your current neighbourhood?*

The interviews were held on a small stage in one corner of the café. The interviewee saw the pictures when arriving at the interview venue, but was asked to choose pictures only during the question 2 and 3. The pictures were aimed at helping the participants to associate to memories, emotions and attitudes about the neighbourhood and to get answers resembling storytelling instead of short answers to simple questions. The pictures for the interviews were chosen based on themes that had emerged during the discussions with residents during *Exploration 1*. The

research team took some of the pictures themselves, other pictures were selected from online image archives. In addition to the interviews there were notes to fill in, people were asked to mention one good thing and one bad thing about Kannelmäki, and they were also asked to describe Kannelmäki with one sentence. When the question notes were filled in they were attached to a board, so that people could see each other's answers.

DATA GATHERED DURING THE EVENT: QUESTION NOTES

The answers to the questions about Kannelmäki were quite similar as in the interviews and the earlier discussions with people on the streets. People valued the basic services, the public transportation and the closeness to nature. The most reoccurring negative aspect was the area around Sitratori, the square in front of the cultural center, next to the train station.



DATA GATHERED DURING THE EVENT: INTERVIEWS

During the event 15 interviews were conducted with people visiting the cultural centre, 8 of these interviews with people who were living in Kannelmäki. The interviews were first made in Finnish and then translated into English. Only the interviews with people living in Kannelmäki are referred to in this thesis. The main topics from the interviews are described below, bringing forth mainly those aspects that have affected the continuation of the process. For a more thorough description of the interviews, see appendix 2, page 168.

The first question *“How would you describe the word neighbourhood?”* was confusing to many of the interviewees and needed clarification. Out of the eight interviews summarized here, the answer to the first question was relevant to all but one of the interviewees. In some of the answers it was possible to see the direct association to the current neighbourhood, even though the answer reflected how the person understood the word. Most of the interviewees talked about the other people living in their neighbourhood as a positive trait, they emphasized the importance to have good neighbours, to care for one another and to experience a sense of community.

The second question involved the pictures that were chosen to facilitate the storytelling interviews. With regards to the questions planned beforehand, the question was articulated as: *“Can you choose the picture that best describes, or that you associate with your ideal neighbourhood?”* In many cases the participants wanted to choose several pictures, therefore the question was reformulated slightly, into: *“Could you choose some of these pictures that somehow describe your dream or ideal neighbourhood?”* Pictures 1 and 15 were most frequently chosen during the interviews. These pictures were chosen in 3 of the interviews. The pictures 2, 6 and 10 were chosen in two interviews each. The balance between having your own space, being able to mind your own business, as opposed to having the possibility to interact with others when desired, became evident within many of the interviews.

The third question, *“Can you choose one picture that describes, or that you associate with your current neighbourhood?”* was, as the previous question, reframed in most of the interviews as, *“Could you choose some of these pictures that somehow describe, or that you can associate with your current neighbourhood?”* The picture that was chosen most frequently was number 21, being chosen in four of the eight interviews. Pictures number 4, 14 and 20 were chosen in two interviews each. The participants' favourite, picture 21, emphasized the greenery, the closeness to nature and walking and biking lanes close to where they live. Most of the interviewees spoke rather positively about their neighbourhood, describing the closeness to nature, the tranquility and peacefulness. The restlessness and the large quantity of pubs were negative aspects raised by several interviewees.

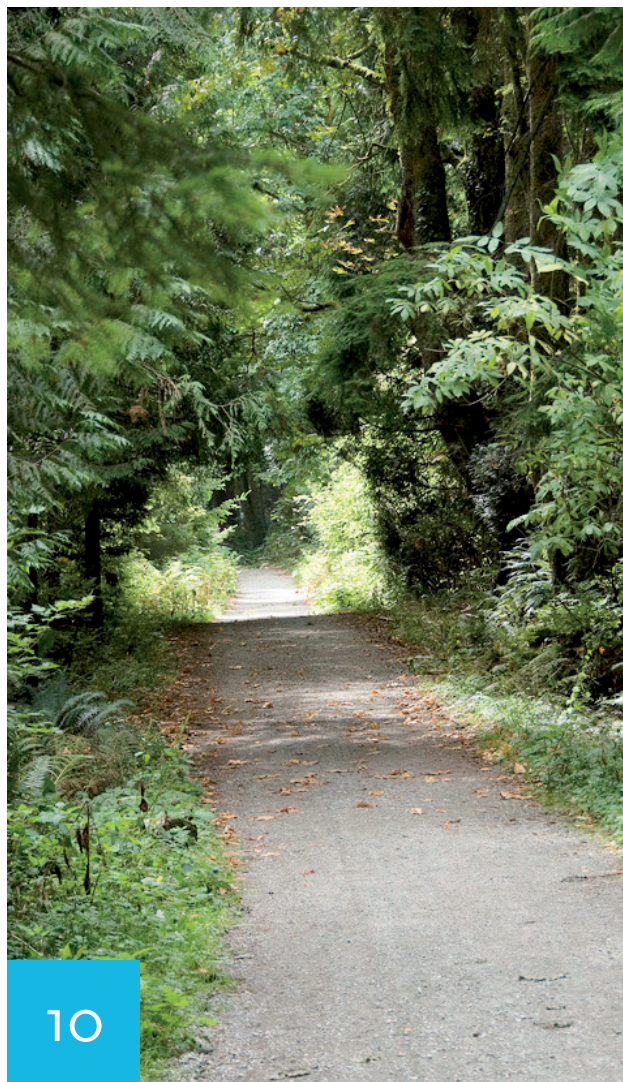




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REFLECTION: INTERVIEWS DATA

The question “*How would you describe the word neighbourhood?*” causing some confusion might be due to the difficulty of defining the word in a simple manner. As Kearns & Parkinson (2001) remark, neighbourhood cannot be interpreted in one single way and different areas serve different functions while different individuals have different expectations of their neighbourhood. The interviewees generally associated *neighbourhood* with *people*, in many cases they also referred to the physical area close to their homes. Neighbourhood is related to the place where one lives, and is therefore based on personal perceptions. The interview answers, where neighbourhood is described as an area through both physical and social aspects is in line with how Richardson & Mumford (2002) describe neighbourhood as a social system, consisting of both people and place.

The interviewees’ ideal neighbourhood is similar to the findings made by Kortteinen & al. (2005), where tranquillity and nature were among the five most important aspects in the living environment among the residents of Helsinki. Similarly, as in the first question regarding what the word neighbourhood means, the interviewees emphasized the importance of social contacts, social cohesion and a sense of community when choosing pictures regarding the ideal neighbourhood. It is worth mentioning that several of the pictures displayed during the interview did show people, often doing things together, which might of course have affected the extent to which the interviewees chose said pictures. On the other hand pictures related to neighbourhoods naturally entail people, since neighbourhoods are forms of social systems. According to the findings made by Kortteinen & al. (2005) the reason for willingness to move to another area, among residents of Helsinki, is related to perceived restlessness and insecurity. This relates to how one perceives one’s neighbours and to what kinds of relationships one has in the living area. As Forrest & Kearns (2001) suggest, the neighbourhood may have an increased role as an arena for comfort and security. If this holds true, the quality of the social relations among neighbours becomes even more important. In many cases the reason for experiencing the feeling of insecurity might arise from the unknown. Doing things together and knowing your neighbours, which were emphasized in the interviews, can be seen as a link to the feeling of security. A sense of belonging also contributes to this feeling.

Themes that emerged from the interviews with regards to both the questions of ideal and current neighbourhoods, were nature, various social activities, togetherness and social cohesion. It can be seen that the interviewees value doing things together, carrying out community efforts and meeting around common interests. On the other hand, they also find it important to protect their privacy and peace, with the possibility of being able to connect with others when they desire. The aspects within the findings described by Kortteinen & al. (2005) regarding an ideal living environment, according to the residents of Helsinki, reflect similar

attitudes as those attained from the interviews conducted during the Syö & Kerro event. The importance of tranquillity and perceived security is linked to how one perceives the social aspects in the living environment and how one relates to one's neighbours.

The social aspect is an important part of evaluating one's neighbourhood. The social capital, which exists in the relationships among people (Coleman, 1988), has an important role within a neighbourhood. As Forrest & Kearns (2001) state, the social capital is important not for its own sake but for what one does with it. The importance of social contact between people in a neighbourhood is not to be underestimated, even if neighbours might not be as dependent on each other as might be the case in a less wealthy society. Nevertheless the quality of the neighbourhood is perceived by its residents depending on the quality of the social contacts within it. The social capital in a neighbourhood is related to aspects of collaboration. The neighbourhood can be looked after in cooperation among the residents, for example through community efforts. Social capital within the neighbourhood is also related to the cohesion of the neighbourhood, how well the residents collectively tackle challenges and to the quality of social contacts.

EVALUATION OF THE STORYTELLING INTERVIEWS

By listening to the stories of the participants the research team could form an empathic understanding of the experiences, perceptions and dreams of those residents who participated in the storytelling session. The pictures worked well as a way to encourage the interviewees to associate to feelings and memories.

During most of the interviews the negative aspects of the area were raised at the end of the interview, in some cases even after the recorder had been switched off. As was noticed already during Exploration 1, residents seemed to be aware that there are negative rumours and attitudes towards Kannelmäki, but they wanted rather to highlight the positive sides of the area. This also became apparent during the interviews.

At the end of one interview the interviewee stated; *"it is a calm area, even though people keep saying bad things about Kannelmäki."* (man, 65 years old) the wife of this man had come to sit beside him and concluded, *"It is evident that each one is defending their own home, home district."* This relates to the link between the area belonging to those who live there and the feeling of belonging, or attachment to a place. As mentioned by Forrest and Kearns (2001), the neighbourhood plays a role in shaping one's identity. Therefore the neighbourhood can become something quite personal and it is evident that people do not want their neighbourhood to be talked about in a negative way.

EVALUATION OF THE SYÖ & KERRO EVENT

The popularity and attention of Restaurant Day provided a good occasion for the public event Syö & Kerro, combining the intention of listening to opinions of the residents with setting up an event that brings people from the area together in a casual and enjoyable way. As the event was public anyone was free to join the interviews or to fill in the question notes. In this way people could themselves decide whether to participate or not and the research team was not deciding who to approach or invite, as had been the case during *Exploration 1*.

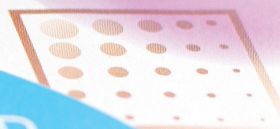
Despite the efforts in spreading information prior to the event, the research team realized during the event that most of the participants were visiting the cultural centre for other reasons, only a few came because they had received an invitation or seen the event posters. The café in the cultural centre was a suitable venue for the event as there were people visiting the building throughout the day. People's attention was drawn when they noticed that something out of the ordinary was happening. Most of the people did not spontaneously arrive to participate in the interview, but most of those who were asked to participate, when it was explained what the event was about, did agree to either fill in the question notes or to be interviewed. The question notes served as a way to collect input from those who did not want to, or did not have the time to participate in the interview. The board where the filled-in question notes were attached attracted passers-by to stop and read the answers.

One challenge during the event, similar to *Exploration 1*, was to describe the project of which the event was a part of. Since the research team wanted to remain open-minded and let the data gathered from the residents guide the process further, they did not know exactly what the further steps in the process would be. They shortly explained that the event was part of a design project focusing on Kannelmäki and part of their master's studies at Aalto University. Most of the people were satisfied with this explanation and participated because it was a project organized by students. Others wanted to know more precisely what the research team was aiming for. As during *Exploration 1*, the research team tried to be as honest as possible, explaining that the progression of the process would take shape as they found out more about the area and the residents' perceptions about it. The research team also mentioned that one motivation was to find ways to improve the living environment in collaboration with the residents.

SYNTHESIS

People described “*neighbourhood*” as both the area where they live and the people living there, most of them giving a strong emphasis on the neighbours. The ideal neighbourhood was often described as a place with good social contacts, where neighbours do things together, where nature is close, where you can find your own time and space, but where you can also reach out to others when you want to. The current neighbourhood was often described rather positively, in similar ways as people had described Kannelmäki during *Exploration 1*, pointing out the good connections, services and green areas. People also mentioned negative things, such as restlessness and untidiness in certain parts of Kannelmäki. The interviewees showed an interest in building social capital within the neighbourhood while simultaneously stressing the importance of tranquillity, peace and nature. The interviews served as a source of inspiration and comprehension of a rather multi-layered topic, enabling the design process to be taken further. The overall outcome of the event was successful as valuable data was gathered, which helped the research team to take the process further.





Exploration 3:

Hyvän Arjen Kannelmäki

COLLECTING IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO IMPROVE A PROBLEMATIC AREA
Workshop 4.2.2012

The workshop was planned and carried out by three art education students and the author. Art education students Saara Kähönen, Lotta Kauppi and Elisa Jablonowska participated in setting up the workshop as a part of their Museum Pedagogy -course.

PUBLIC SPACE

Landry (2008, 119) describes *public space* as a multifaceted concept with an important role within innovative urban areas. It is a physical setting as well as an arena for exchange, where the spaces serve as meeting places in both formal and informal ways. (Landry 2008, 119.) Tonnelat (2010) notes that public space has historically been referred to as *the open spaces* in urban planning, including streets, parks and squares. In sociology public space has mostly been evaluated based on its accessibility, and whether it guarantees free circulation of persons and goods or not. Accessibility for all of the residents also contributes to the possibility of producing collective images of the city. Public spaces are often considered important for urban renewal and development related to aspects such as wellbeing, the image of the city and conviviality. The success and need of public spaces depends on the way in which accessibility and communication are brought together. The right amount and balance between these two are essential if issues related to the urban area are to be addressed collectively. Public spaces can be everything from *open to all* to *exclusive* and from *communitarian* to *anonymous*. (Tonnelat 2010.)

IDEA / PURPOSE

The area of Sitratori, that is, the square situated by the train station of Kannelmäki, in front of the cultural centre Kanneltalo, was frequently mentioned to be a restless and unpleasant area during discussions with local people. Residents said that they avoid going to the area, and do not enjoy spending time at the square. As described by Tonnelat (2010) the public space should be accessible to all. This was not the case with Sitratori. The

square has potential to serve as a public space fitting Landry's (2008, 119) description of an arena for exchange and a meeting place. Currently it was however an area associated to a certain group of people and to a certain kind of behaviour that many residents experienced as threatening. Therefore Sitratori was focused upon, and local residents were invited to ideate around how the area could be improved.

WORKSHOP: SET UP

The workshop, *Tango – Hyvän arjen Kannelmäki*, "Good everyday life in Kannelmäki" was organized during the WDC 2012 weekend during which design events were organized throughout the Helsinki metropolitan area. The workshop was more directly advertised as preparation for the upcoming *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood* -workshop and as being part of the TANGO project and the 365 wellbeing initiative, than the previous event in Exploration 2. The workshop was set up in Kanneltalo, since the location had proved to be suitable in reaching for the opinions of the residents during the previous exploration, and because it was natural for the workshop to be located close to the area which was the subject of the workshop.

WORKSHOP: METHOD

GENERATIVE TOOLS

Within *generative design research* participants are involved in creative work, and are given the possibility to express feelings, thoughts and desires that would be difficult to express only verbally (Martin & Hanington 2012, 94). There are several different kinds of generative tools, the main idea is that the participants make *designerly artefacts*, in some cases these artefacts are collages (Stappers & Sanders 2004). When using collage as a generative tool the collage kit is typically designed with a limited amount of pictures and words to use on a blank sheet of paper, while the participants often have the possibility to add words and images by writing and drawing (Martin & Hanington 2012, 34). The visual generative tools are often used in addition to a verbal conversation among the participants and the designers to form a common design language (Sanders 2006, 6). These methods can also be referred to as *make methods* as they let the designer observe not only what people say or do, but also what they make. The tools enhance the creativity of *everyday people* while the artefacts they create inspire the work of the designer. (Sanders & William 2003, 145-156.)





DESIGN PROBES

Design probes, used within user-centered design, are tool-kits designed and usually sent to the participants for self-documentation (Mattelmäki 2006). There are similarities between design probes and generative tools in that they invite people from outside the design field to participate in the design process by bringing their personal experiences and perceptions into the design process, usually with the aid of visual tools. By looking at cases where probes have been applied, Mattelmäki (2005, 87) identifies the following reasons for using probes: *inspiration, information, participation and dialogue*.

Inspired by the *generative tools* and the *design probes* the author decided to use collage making as a method to gather ideas from the residents of Kannelmäki about how to improve the area around the train station. The method has similarities with the methods described above, but was not implemented in the exact same manner as either of these two methods. In this case there was no designed collage toolkit with a limited amount of building blocks. Instead the participants were given the freedom to use a wide range of different coloured paper and pictures they themselves chose from magazines and newspapers that were brought to the workshop. The residents were given an unlimited amount of building blocks, but the sheet the collage was to be built on was prepared in advance. The author took a set of different photos of the area around the train station. The photos were printed on black and white paper and the participants could choose one of the photos available. They could then build their ideal view of what the place could be like upon the photo, by using the materials provided during the workshop.

The motives for applying the collage method were similar to those described in relation to generative tools and design probes. The idea was to let the workshop participants express their dreams and desires in a visual way, since it can often be hard to express such things verbally (Martin & Hanington 2012, 94), while the reasons for applying probes; *inspiration, information, participation and dialogue* (Mattelmäki 2005, 87) also motivated the author to use the collage method. The author was mainly interested in *inspiration* for what could be done, *information* about what the people desire, while offering the residents an opportunity to *participate* in the idea generation process regarding ways in which to improve the area. The author thought of *dialogue* as a side-product, which would be generated spontaneously during the workshop, and indirectly between the residents and the workshop's organizers through the visual material.

For those who were not eager to express themselves visually, question notes with three simple questions about the living environment and Sitratori were prepared. The following questions were asked; “*What kind of things in your living environment make you feel good?*”, “*What kind of things in your living environment bother you?*” and “*Describe Sitratori with one sentence.*”

WHAT WAS FOUND OUT

ANALYSING THE MATERIAL

Mattelmäki (2006, 89) has proposed that the techniques for analysing user-data within concept development presented by Jääskö & Keinonen (2003); *applying interpretation models, interpretation in the terms of the material, condensing and combining, and direct interpretation* can be used when analysing probes. Within direct interpretation the material is interpreted without a structured analysis and acts as a source of inspiration while generating ideas and insights (Mattelmäki 2006, 94). The collages represented one form of user data, even though the residents are here referred to as *everyday people*, instead of users, and the data was analysed by direct interpretation. This technique was chosen since the main idea of the workshop was to get inspiration from the residents for what could be done in order to improve the area around the train station.

When using *generative tools* the visual material is usually supported by verbal presentation of the material and by conversation among the participants, the dialogue then affects how the material is analysed. During this workshop there was not a facilitated presentation nor conversation, but in some cases the people told the workshop facilitators in greater detail about their ideas, other preferred to let the material speak for itself. Dialogue was created both among the residents and among the workshop facilitators and the residents, but the dialogue did not guide the direction of the process as strongly as the visual material.

DATA: THE COLLAGES

Many of the collages made proposed colours at the walls of the buildings, more flowers, trees, greenery and traces of nature to be visible at the square. A few people proposed different kinds of lights to either decorate the buildings or to light up the area. In many of the collages it was possible to find a wish for an alternative to the bars. There were suggestions, such as cafés, markets, music and events. There was a suggestion that one of the empty buildings next to Sitratori could be used for art and culture and a few people suggested that the train station could be moved.

HUHALAISET JA KOKO
HEITTÄVÄT AIKUISET JA
LAPSET.

Miten kuvailisit Sitratoria yhdellä lauseella?
How would you describe Sitratori in one sentence?

KESÄLLÄ LOISTAVA TAPA
HISPAIKKA.

Millaiset asiat asuinympäristössäsi
tuovat sinulle hyvää oloa?
What kind of things in your living environment
make you feel good?

TRYVAINEN
YMPÄRISTÖN.
LÄHTEO, RAUTALII.

Millaiset asiat asuinympäristössäsi häiritsevät sinua?
What kind of things in your living environment
bother you?

Miten kuvailisit Sitratoria yhdellä lauseella?
How would you describe Sitratori in one sentence?

Miten kuvailisit Sitratoria yhdellä lauseella?
How would you describe Sitratori in one sentence?

Melko tiivis ympäristö sekä
hyvässä että pahassa.

Millaiset asiat asuinympäristössäsi
tuovat sinulle hyvää oloa?
What kind of things in your living environment
make you feel good?

There are many "things!"

1. People
2. Weather
3. Food
4. Hobby.

Millaiset asiat asuinympäristössäsi häiritsevät sinua?
What kind of things in your living environment
bother you?

1. Negative people
2. Lack of justice
3. Lack of free time

Miten kuvailisit Sitratoria yhdellä lauseella?
How would you describe Sitratori in one sentence?

"Place to visit."



DATA: THE QUESTION NOTES

Those who participated in the workshop by filling in the question note often referred to other people and nature when answering what makes them feel good in their living area. They were most often bothered by negative attitudes among other people and restlessness, while Sitratori was described both positively as a meeting place and negatively as an unpleasant area.

EVALUATION

Having set up one event the preparations for the second one went smoother, as from experience the author knew who to contact and which information channels to use. Since most of the participants came to the previous event because they happened to be at the cultural centre, the amount of time and energy spent on distributing information prior to this event was smaller than prior to the *Syö & Kerro* event in *Exploration 2*. The workshop facilitators counted on having people who happened to visit the building participate in the workshop, and there were people by the workshop table throughout the day.

The collage technique, which was used to describe ideas about how to ameliorate the area, was a quick and easy way for people to show their ideas visually. The task being easy and letting people decide for themselves how much time and effort to put into it lowered the threshold for people to participate. The possibility to leave a written response served as a good alternative as all people were not comfortable with expressing themselves visually. Certain participants, especially the younger ones, enjoyed the task very much and stayed by the workshop point for quite a long time. Some of the participants discussed the area amongst themselves, and exchanged opinions and ideas about what the current situation in the area is, and what could be done to improve it.

SYNTHESIS

The collage technique was an effective tool for the residents to describe their ideas about how the area could be improved. The workshop participants proposed alternatives to the current situation in the form of a more colourful area with more of a garden feeling than the current concrete square, and with cafés rather than bars. They also suggested that there could be events with music happenings and markets. The workshop served as a venue to bring people from different age groups and with different backgrounds together to propose ideas for how to deal with an issue of common concern.





Mina valitsin
kan, koska
koin keu

Exploration 4: Tärkeä Paikka

CREATING INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS
THROUGH IMPORTANT PLACES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
Project March - April 2012

SENSE OF PLACE

Despite the fact that our society in the *information age* is increasingly organized around networks, Castells (2000, 458) points out that “...*people do still live in places*”. The places people live in still have a central role in contemporary society. Places can contribute to community building, even though places are not always communities (Castells 2000, 455). As explained in chapter 6, there are many different kinds of communities. In this thesis community is discussed related to a location and the relations among those living in a specific location. Social cohesion within a community is related to place attachment and identity (Kearns & Forrest 2000). Sense of place relates to how a person experiences a place and to the extent to which a person identifies or belongs to a place. These aspects in turn are related both to the physical environment and to the people who live there. (Dempsey et al. 2011, 296.) According to Relph (1976, 47) the identity of a place consists of the physical environment, the activities taking place and the meanings that people associate with the places. Despite the meanings being rooted in the physical environment or the activities, they are based on human experiences or intentions. Relph (1976) argues that the feeling of belonging to a place can be as important for a person as close relationships to other people. He concludes his book, *Place and placelessness*, by stating that there is a profound human need for attachment to places.

PURPOSE

After the two events organised in Kanneltalo the author wanted to do something outside the cultural center and connect with a group of people for a longer period of time. The objective with the postcard project was to create connections between the adolescents and older people living in Kannelmäki through reflecting over which places are important in their neighbourhood. The author was interested in knowing what kind of places in the area are important for the residents of Kannelmäki and what kind of attachment they have to said places. Reflecting upon important places in the area could be a common interest that could connect people of different ages living in the same area.

METHOD

The author developed a method she called *Tärkeä paikka*, important place. Within this method young people in the area were to choose places they for some reason find important, and then portray the place on a self-made postcard. The card would be sent to an elderly person living in the area and the elderly would respond to the postcard.

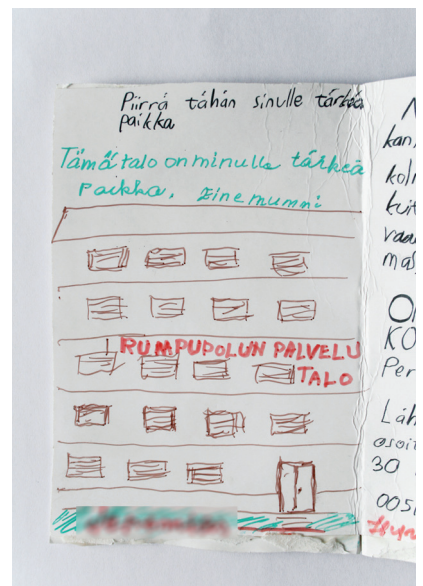
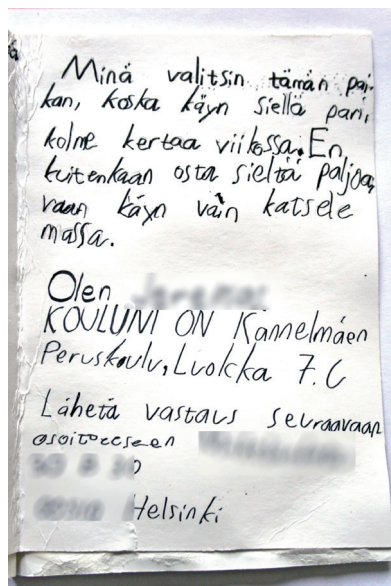
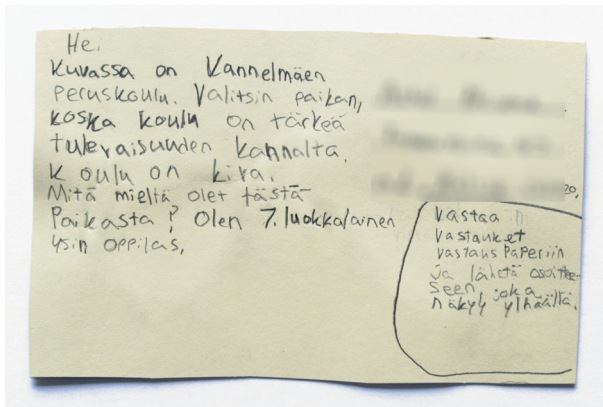
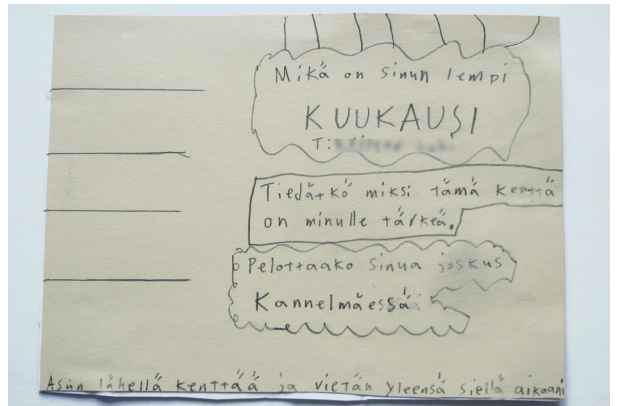
DESCRIPTION

The author visited Kannelmäen peruskoulu, the compulsory school in Kannelmäki, during a period of 5 weeks. During the art classes of a group of 13 years old pupils, the author facilitated the postcard project, where the students were encouraged to reflect upon their living environment. During the lessons the students did postcards of places in Kannelmäki that they found important. Each student chose a place in the area and then decided by him or herself in which way to present the place in the postcard. Many of the pupils photographed the places they chose, others made drawings. The students wrote on the back of the postcard about why they chose the certain place and in which way the place is important to them. Each card had a question, either regarding the chosen place or inquiring about a place in Kannelmäki which is important to the elderly person. Some of the students made two postcards, the second one for the elderly to send back to the student.

Most of the cards were sent to persons who are part of an association for retired people in Kannelmäki called *Kaarelan eläkeläiset*. During a visit to their weekly meeting the author collected contact information from those who were interested in participating in the project. Some of the postcards still needed respondents, so the author visited an elderly home in Kannelmäki. The seniors from the elderly home responded to the postcards, while discussing how long they had lived in Kannelmäki, what they think about the area, which places are important and about memories related to the area.

POSTCARDS & PLACES

The places chosen by the students were locations they visit in their daily life, such as the school, the shopping centre Prisma, the football field and Sitratori. One student chose her own balcony, this was the only private place portrayed in the postcards, all the other places were public. It was possible to see that some of the students were influenced by their friends, and chose the same or a similar place as the person sitting next to them. Many of the students asked the recipients what their important place is. One elderly person answered that the service house, Rum-pupolun palvelutalo where he lives, is his most important place in Kannelmäki.



EVALUATION

Carrying out a project where the author met the same group of people for several weeks gave her the opportunity to develop a more complex process than during the previous one day workshops. Involving certain groups, such as the school class and the elderly from the service centre, also meant that she could count on the people being there at an agreed time, in contrast to the one day events when there was no way of knowing beforehand how many people would arrive and who these people would be. Despite the advantage of meeting the same group of students recurrently, the author found it challenging to work with the adolescents, it was difficult to get them inspired about the project and to create a connection with them. Despite the challenges each student made a postcard and many of the postcards were responded to by the recipients.

When the author contacted the school she thought that the contact created during the spring could lead to involving the school class in some event linked to the *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood*-workshop. This succeeded to some extent but the author had hoped for a stronger connection with both the students and the teachers in the school. The fact that the project was done during the school day probably also affected the attitude the students had towards the project. Nevertheless, creating a connection with the school made it possible for the author to reach teenagers who would most likely not have been aware of the *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood*-workshop and the events related to it.

The method used in this exploration could be used within other areas as a tool in getting to know what places in an area the residents have a special attachment to. This could be useful for a designer or a community worker who is aiming at carrying out a project in a certain area. The tool can simultaneously be used as a way to encourage reflection and discussion among residents concerning their living environment and their personal opinions about specific places.

SYNTHESIS

The postcard project *Tärkeä paikka* served as a way to encourage residents to reflect upon which places in the neighbourhood they find important, while the postcards sent created an indirect connection between residents from different generations. The method served as a tool for the residents to explore their own and others' ideas, opinions and images of different places in the neighbourhood. It was also a tool for the author to get to know more about what kinds of attachments people living in Kannelmäki have to specific places.



Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood

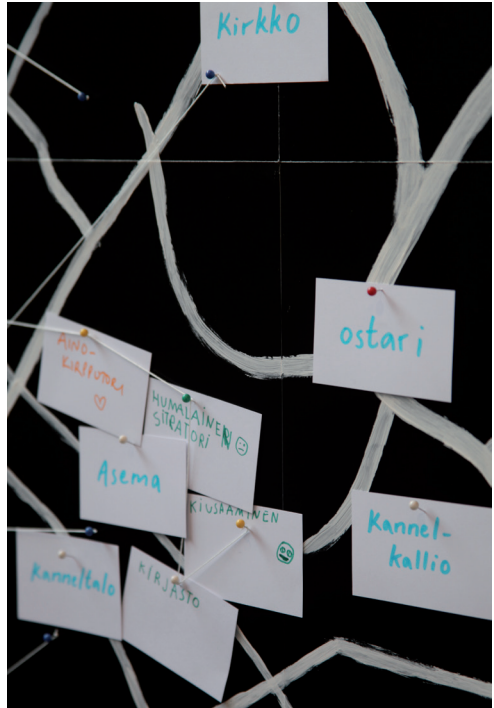
WORKSHOP & EXHIBITION

May 2.-8.5.2012

The exhibition was planned and built by the author, in collaboration with Kirsi Niinimäki and Sandra Viña, who were teaching and coordinating the Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood -workshop. This part of the process is not considered one of the explorations, but as an initiative to which the explorations relate to.

The workshop *Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood* (RSN) was held in Kanneltalo during one week at the beginning of May 2012. The data gathered throughout the explorations prior to the workshop was exhibited during the workshop and served as background material for the students participating in the course. The workshop was run in an exhibition space, where the residents of Kannelmäki could follow the work. Exhibiting the data collected during the process was a way to show the residents what had been found out during the process. In this way the findings could portray how the area is seen among those who had participated in the process. Showing the findings was also a way to create discussion among the residents, raise new questions and make them think about their living environment in new ways.

The post card project was exhibited during the workshop week, and all the students and elderly who had been involved in the project were invited. Here the young and the elderly met for the first time and the students participating in the RSN-workshop had their first encounter with residents from Kannelmäki. The places chosen by the students were marked on a map attached to the wall, and the comments about these places were displayed. Those who visited the exhibition space during the workshop could add their own important places to the map and write down comments about these places. In this way an indirect form of communication about the area among the residents of Kannelmäki was created. In addition, exhibiting the postcard project and collecting additional input throughout the workshop-week served as a way for the students participating in the RSN-workshop to find out what kinds of places are important to the residents.





Exploration 5: Block party

A PROPOSITION FOR HOW TO AMELIORATE THE EXISTING SITUATION

Event 5.5.2012

The event was set up in collaboration with residents and organizations from Kannelmäki. The coordination and planning of the event was done by the author with help and support from Kirsi Niinimäki and Sandra Viña who were instructors at the Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood-workshop, and Henna Harri who was coordinator for the TANGO-project.

INTERACTIONAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bridger & Luloff (1999) propose an *interactional approach to sustainable community development*. This approach is based on the idea that community depends upon social interaction. Sustainable community development, described as sustainable development on a local level, depends upon the community's capacity to act. Recognizing social interaction as an imperative for a community to exist makes it possible to envision strategies for how to strengthen local capacity and forms of social organization. Within most local communities there is a variety of different social fields, with their own interests and values. The interactional approach to community development suggests that groups with different interests can be brought together by a common concern in the local area. Different social groups in the area have their own reasons for being interested in a certain location. Finding overlapping interests at a certain site among the groups that operate within a local community can serve as a starting point for developing mutual understanding and trust among the different social fields. This can serve as an effective way of strengthening the community's capacity to act, as collaboration among the different social fields within the community is crucial for sustainable community development. (Bridger & Luloff 1999.)

PURPOSE

During the workshop week in May 2012 a block party was organized at Sitratori, the square in front of the cultural centre. The event was a response to the data gathered during the previous steps. During the *Syö & Kerro* event (*Exploration 2*) people talked about the neighbourhood by mostly referring to other people and to the importance of having the possibility to interact with others when desired.

They also talked about doing things together with their neighbours, with the ideal neighbourhood being described as a place where neighbours organize community efforts and parties together. During the *Hyvän arjen Kannelmäki* -workshop (Exploration 3) people suggested that there should be events, markets and cafés at Sitratori instead of bars, restlessness and litter. While the event was organized in response to the previously gathered data, it was also aimed to be a way of providing a temporary setting as an example for the residents of how they themselves can affect the atmosphere at the square. The common concern, suggested as a starting point for sustainable community development by Bridger & Luloff (1999), was in this case Sitratori. By inviting different groups and individuals to an event that would have an impact on how the square is perceived, new relationships and mutual understanding among the residents would hopefully emerge, and lead to further collaboration essential for sustainable community development. An additional objective was that of gathering the residents of the area to a social event, in order for the students participating in the *Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood* -workshop to easily get in touch with the local residents.

PREPARATIONS

During one of the art classes with the students from the local school involved in the postcard project (Exploration 4) the author held a workshop where ideas for what could be done during the block party were collected. The students proposed things such as music, dance, games, bingo and a café for the event. Local actors and organizations were contacted and invited to perform or to organize activities during the day. A notice about the event was put on the local web page of Kannelmäki in order for the residents to suggest activities for the day, and e-mailing lists were used to inform organizations and individuals about both the upcoming event and about the possibility to get involved in setting up the event. Closer to the block party, posters were put up at central places in the area. Invitations were sent through e-mailing lists, posted on the local web page and added to the web page of the cultural centre, Kanneltalo.

THE EVENT

There was a variety of different performances and activities during the day. A local band consisting of teenagers performed, an art therapist was in charge of a painting workshop that lasted throughout the day, a local association for retired people organized bingo, the library was selling old books and the lady from the café in Kanneltalo had a coffee stand at Sitratori during the event. There was a zumba performance with the instructors from a local gym and people were invited to participate in the fitness session. A group of people practicing *falun dafa* had several sessions throughout the day and they also taught a *thai chi*-resembling lesson to





others while giving out information about their group. A knit-graffiti workshop was by coincidence held in the youth centre during the same day and their works were attached at different places around the square. A few activities were organized inside the cultural centre as well. Short movies that were made by adolescents living in Kannelmäki were shown, and in the gallery one of the librarians was hosting a session where people could play different board games. There was an installation of flowers at the stairs of Kanneltalo, and at the end of the day people could collect the plants and take them home.

EVALUATION

The immediate feedback from those who were involved in setting up the event, and those who visited Sitratori during the day, was very positive. Despite the weather being rather grey and cold, people were enjoying the ambience which was much more alive and less hostile than what is usually the case in this area. People were not rushing from the shops or the train station to get away from the square as soon as possible, instead they stayed and either observed what was happening or took part in the activities. The event was visited by a wide variety of people. Some participants happened to pass by while others knew about the event beforehand and came to Sitratori because of the event. Some of the visitors had seen the posters, others had heard about it as the people who were involved in organizing activities for the event had spread the word about it among their friends and acquaintances. This was an effective way to get people interested as they could associate the event with someone from the area, instead of only getting information through the posters and the local information channels.

Compared to the previously organized events this event reached a broader audience. As it was organized outside the cultural centre the threshold to participate was lowered, especially for those who do not usually visit Kanneltalo. The people who normally spend time at the square, mostly those who sit in the bars or the youth who hang out without anything in particular to do, also participated in some of the activities during the block party. The painting workshop was especially very popular, as people could just go to stands where paper was already attached and take colours from a table and start painting. The performances, especially the *zumba* and the music played by the local band, also attracted the attention of those spending time at the terraces of the bars.

Having organized some of the initiatives inside the cultural centre was, in addition to having a back-up plan in case of bad weather, also a good way to get people inside the cultural centre and towards the gallery where the exhibition and workshop was held. The students participating in the Repicturing Suburban Neighborhood workshop could speak with the residents and ask them to participate in different tasks that they had prepared in order to get more insight into the residents' opinions about the area. Some of the students took their prepared ways



of gathering data outside the cultural centre and used the block party as an opportunity to get answers to various questions addressed to the residents.

The flowers were very popular and many people who had visited the event earlier during the day came back to pick up a few plants at the end of the block party. This was a good way to say thank you to both all the people who were involved in organizing, and to the people who visited the event. In addition, the flowers served as a way to temporarily decorate the area around the square and as a memory for the residents as they could take the flowers with them and plant them somewhere else in the area. In a symbolic way the flowers represented the seeds we planted in the area and hoped for the residents to look after.

As the students from the local school had been involved in planning the event they were invited and could see that some of their ideas had been realized. Setting up the event together with local people and representatives of different organizations was a way to demonstrate the resources that already exist in the area. The event was a proposition of one way to make the area less hostile, by taking ownership of the area and making something positive happen with local collaboration. In this case the initiative to organize the happening was taken by the author and the other persons involved in planning and coordinating. Setting up the block party was a way to show that quite small efforts can impact the atmosphere in the area. It was also a way to show the residents that they can themselves make similar initiatives in order to make their living area more enjoyable.

When setting up the event as a proposition of how to improve the current situation, the intention was not to point towards certain behaviour, nor to blame certain groups for making the area seem hostile among others. The event was rather a way to show that the perceived feeling of safety depends on how the public space is used. All forms of collaborative events can have a positive impact on what



associations are made to the area in question. In this case Sitratori does not any longer need to be considered as a restless and unpleasant area, but as an area where residents can organize events, meet each other and enjoy their neighbourhood through efforts related to resources that already exist in the area.

SYNTHESIS

It was important to not only carry out a project for trying to find out perceptions of the living environment while exploring how to approach and create connections with and among local residents as a designer, but to also set up an event where the data that had been gathered was responded to, and where the residents actually got something in return for their involvement in the previous explorations. The methods for gathering data, used during the previous explorations, were influenced by a variety of design methods. Organizing the event as a proposition for improvement was a way to show that a design process can lead to a temporary real-life setting in the form of an event. The event served as a way to show that small initiatives can have an impact on how the living environment is experienced, and that it is quite easy to make such an effort. The event demonstrated the possibility of using public space and making it more vivid and enjoyable. It also served as a way to get local people together around a common concern in a fun and positive way, while resources found within the area were highlighted. The block party brought together a variety of local actors and was a catalyst for the emergence of new forms of collaboration. It also made the area less hostile and demonstrated that the area does not only belong to certain groups of people, but can be used by everyone if the setting is right.



Exploration 6: Benches

CO-CREATING AND HIGHLIGHTING PLACES

May 2012

CREATIVE COMMUNITY EFFORTS

Raumlabor Berlin, a Berlin based collective of architects, exercise what they call *experimental architectural practice*. In many of their projects they collaborate with people living in a specific area and create temporary settings through creative community efforts that they refer to as *situated narratives* or *interventions*. (Raumlabor Berlin n.d.) FIT – *The Filling station for creative spirit* is a project by artist Dida Zende that started in Berlin, but has now taken place in many different parts of the world. In the project abandoned gas stations are restored through *friendly takeovers* and transformed into *social sculptures*. At each location where a gas station is taken over and restored, local people are invited to participate in the restoration, while also planning what kinds of activities should take place in the venue. The gas stations serve as event venues, where the people living in the area create the events. (FIT n.d.) The creative community efforts initiated by Raumlabor Berlin and Dida Zende, serve as ways to bring people together while creating something tangible that can be used as a way for further social encounters to take place.

PURPOSE

Benches were built and placed in the area as a way to create something tangible in the spirit of a creative community effort, where the effort would leave a trace in the area. The benches were intended to highlight certain places in the area and to create new meeting places, while acting as subjects for conversation.

IDEA

The author had been inspired by the creative community efforts, such as those initiated by Raumlabor Berlin and Dina Zende. The idea was to carry out a project where people from the area would be brought together through an effort where they would build something that could be used during the block party, and then placed at different locations in the area. The plan was to invite people to bring old chairs that they no longer use to the square one day prior to the block party and to paint the chairs together. The painted chairs would be combined into benches, requiring that each person would have to find a

pair for the project. After combining their chairs into a bench, the pair would then decide where to place the bench. Building the bench and placing it somewhere would create new contacts between people while the benches would serve as meeting places.

METHOD

Through experience from the previous events the author knew that it would be hard to make sure that someone would eventually turn up with a chair that was no longer in use. The author decided to test the idea by bringing the chairs herself and inviting a certain group of people to paint the chairs. The author brought chairs from the recycling centre, boards for building the chairs into benches, and colourful paint to Sitratori. The students from Kannelmäen peruskoulu, that had been involved in the postcard project came to the square with their teacher to practice handicraft and spent a few hours in the afternoon painting the chairs. This took place the day prior to the block party. When the chairs were dry they were built into benches and during the block party people were able to suggest where the benches should be placed. The benches were then placed at a few different locations suggested by the locals as a way to highlight these places and to create possible meeting places and subjects for conversation.

EVALUATION & REFLECTION

By painting the chairs at Sitratori the attention of passers-by was drawn and they could be told about the project and invited to the block party. People who would not normally go into Kanneltalo to see what is going on, were reached while painting and building the benches. When the chairs were dry and the author was building them into benches, she got useful advice about how to proceed by a few local people enjoying a Friday beer at Sitratori. This was the first time the author had direct contact with some of the people who often spend time around the square. It was a valuable connection, and the next day some of the same people joined or followed the Block party.

When placing the benches at the locations suggested by the residents the author got interested in methods for finding out how the benches would be perceived by the residents. The author started to reflect upon the way in which the project could be developed in such a manner, that the highlighted places could more actively encourage new encounters among residents. The author also thought about different options for involving the residents more actively in the project, e.g. by letting people modify or leave messages at the physical meeting place. During the summer the author went back to the places where the benches had been placed a few times. Some of the benches had disappeared while one had been slightly modified. One chair was missing, instead someone had fixed the bench by placing the end without a chair on a stone. This showed that someone had noticed the





Luokka 7c

Kannelmäen peruskoulusta
on osallistunut penkkien
tekemiseen. Mihin
sinä sijoittaisit
ne?

mätökselle!

Taiwaaseen!
annan Mikael
Grandullille

Nuoris-
Talon ulko-
oven viereen

bench and also taken care of it when it was broken. As there was not any hint left for the residents about where the benches came from, nor what project they were a part of, there was no way for the author to know what had happened to the other benches nor whether they had worked as a subject for conversation.

SYNTHESIS

Painting the chairs and building them into benches in public was an effective way to attract attention. The community effort served as a way to connect with passers-by, rather than create connections among people while making the benches as suggested in the original concept. Placing the benches at different locations in the area was a way to leave a mark in the environment and hopefully served as a way to provoke positive associations for those who had seen the benches during the block party. For those who did not know where the benches came from, they most likely served as a way to provoke curiosity and were subjects of conversation with other residents. As the author was interested in knowing the way in which the residents relate to new and surprising objects in their environment she decided to explore the question further.





Exploration 7:

Kuutio, a mobile café

CREATING TEMPORARY MEETING PLACES

August 2012

The cube project was developed and carried through as collaboration between the author and architect student Tuula Mäkinen from Aalto University. Mäkinen and the author are within this chapter referred to as “the project team”. During the events design student Hesam Pakbeen from the Creative Sustainability program at Aalto University documented the project through video recording.

THE THIRD PLACE

Oldenburg (1999) writes about the importance of informal public gathering places in his book *“The Great Good Place”*. He distinguishes between three different types of places which are essential for a healthy everyday life in urban environments. The first place is *home*, the second place is *work* and *the third place* is where people from the neighbourhood can gather without any specific reason, but for the purpose of enjoying each other’s company in a relaxed setting. The third places can be cafeterias, taverns, park benches or hair salons, but all such places are by no reason always considered to be a third place. Said locations serve as third places only in certain cases, where spontaneous encounters among local people take place, where local people get to know each other and where both opinions and knowledge are exchanged. According to Oldenburg the informal public meeting places, where conversation is practiced, are central to local democracy and community vitality. The third place unites the neighbourhood, since it welcomes a vast majority of people. Not everyone who visits the third place needs to like one another, but getting to know the other people in the neighbourhood makes it easier to accomplish things together. Oldenburg claims that the sense of one’s belonging to a community is highly connected to a membership in a third place. In Oldenburg’s *“The Great Good Place”* community is discussed as community of place, and is seen as something that exists within a neighbourhood. However, as described in chapter 6 communities can form around aspects other than place.

PURPOSE

Kuutio, the cube, is a mobile café that visited a series of places in Kannelmäki during August 2012. The purpose of Kuutio was to create a project in collaboration with the residents, in the spirit of a community effort, where the creation of the project could bring people together and create new social contacts within the area. The reason for creating a mobile café, was to create temporary, informal meeting places in the area. Bringing the cube to a certain place would emphasize the location and show it a different light.

BACKGROUND

During the course *Repicturing Suburban Neighbourhood*, the author got familiar with Tuula Mäkinie, an architect student from the Aalto-university who participated in the course that was held in Kannelmäki in May 2012. Mäkinie and the author had similar ideas about building something physical together with the residents in the spirit of a community effort where the construction could serve as a social space. People would be brought together, first by the effort of building something that could serve as a social space, then through events and activities organized in the venue. During the workshop week in Kannelmäki, Mäkinie had, with her group members, ideated about a mobile café as one part of a system (footnote 365 service) that would activate residents to make initiatives to improve their living environment. The author was thinking about how to develop the bench-project into something where residents could have an opportunity to leave messages and where the highlighted places could more actively serve as temporary meeting places. By combining their ideas, Mäkinie and the author, developed the cube concept, Kuutio. The concept was developed in June 2012 and the project was carried out in August 2012.

THE CONCEPT

When creating the concept the main idea was that it will be a mobile café that is created in collaboration with the residents. The project team decided that Kuutio would arrive to Kannelmäki for approximately one week towards the end of the summer and visit a series of places in the area. Temporary meeting places would be created in the places visited by Kuutio and in each place a trace would be left to show that the cube had been in that particular place. Those visiting the café were to have a possibility for leaving messages and art work in the café, and this would result in slight modifications of the cube throughout the week.

From the very beginning the cube was envisioned as a mobile café around which meeting places would be created, but the first plans pointed towards a construction that would resemble a mobile kiosk and would fold out as a terrace. The intent was to build the cube in collaboration with the residents. When discussing about

the goal and the main intention with the project it became evident that the physical construction was not as important as the event itself. The purpose of the cube was to act as a platform and the meeting places were to be created in the locations visited by the cube. The project team decided to simplify their idea in order for the concept to be tried out in practice, within the limits of time and resources that were available.

Finally the cube was designed as a foldable coffee table that was to be built by the project team, while leaving possibilities for the café visitors to finalize the table surface throughout the week. The cube would be transported on a two-wheeled barrow, of the same model which formerly was used to transport milk. In this way the project team created a simple structure beforehand, with a possibility for the residents to leave their marks on the cube.

PREPARATIONS: JULY

The project team wanted to let the residents of Kannelmäki know that something was about to happen, but decided to start spreading the word without giving too much away about the project. A blog⁴ with basic information about the cube was created. The project was advertised by spreading origami cubes with the blog address attached around Kannelmäki. The cubes acted as flyers and were aimed at catching people's attention and curiosity. Simple posters were also spread around the area, informing residents that the mobile café Kuutio will arrive to Kannelmäki in August. Approaching the actual event-week, more detailed posters with the schedule and a list of locations the café was to visit, were distributed.

PREPARATIONS: AUGUST

Prior to the event week in August the project team contacted several different actors that supported them in different ways during the event week. The café-keeper in Kanneltalo let the project team make coffee in her café and the team got permission to keep the trolley with the cube in the lobby of the cultural centre in-between the events. The recycle centre, Kierrätyskeskus supported the project with a small sum for which the team got to choose material. Bookshelves and legs from old tables were found at the recycle centre and then used as building material for the cube.

4 kannelmakikuutio.wordpress.com



18.8. - 25.8.2012

KUUTIO

LIIKKUVA KAHVILA



Kuutio on rakennettu kierrätyspuusta ja siirtyy paikasta toiseen maitokärryn avulla. Kuution sisältä löytyy kahvilatarvikkeita ja se taittuu kahvipöydäksi, jonka pinta kahvilavieraat saavat koristaa viestein ja piirroksin. Pöydän ympärillä myös askarrellaan ja koristellaan ympäristöä eri tavoin.

1. Avajaiset 18.8. klo 11-15

Kuutiota viimeistellään yhdessä Sitatorilla

2. Ravintolapäivä 19.8. klo 12-16

Kuutio liikkuu Kannelmässä

3. Taiteiden yö 23.8. klo 18-20

Kuutio saapuu Mätäjoen laiturille

4. Päättäjäiset 25.8. klo 12-16

Kahvilan vierailijat voivat vaikuttaa sijaintiin



kannelmakuutio.wordpress.com
www.facebook.com/kannelmakuutio

THE EVENT-WEEK

SATURDAY 18TH OF AUGUST

OPENING; PAINTING THE CUBE AT SITRATORI

During the opening the cube was painted in public and passers-by were invited to participate. Some passers-by were curious about what was going on, while others were not too eager to participate. There were people who approached the project team spontaneously with questions about the cube, but there were also many who did not dare to ask anything, instead they observed the painting operation from a distance. There were also some people who already knew about the project, as they had either seen the posters or the cube in the lobby of the cultural centre, and approached the team in order to get additional information.

SUNDAY 19TH OF AUGUST RESTAURANT DAY

During Restaurant day⁵ Kuutio visited three different places in Kannelmäki in rainy weather. The first spot for the café was in a park area, in-between houses, with trees as shelter from the rain. There were only a few customers at the first location, most likely due to the weather. When Kuutio arrived at the second spot, there were already a few young customers waiting for the café to open. The last spot of the day was at the terrace by Mätäjoki, a small creek passing by Kannelmäki. During the visit at the terrace the café got several visitors. Most of them had received the information through the webpage of the Restaurant day, where the event had been registered. Towards the afternoon the rain stopped and more people were outside, and this resulted in more customers than at the beginning of the day.

THURSDAY 23RD OF AUGUST VISIT AT THE ELDERLY HOME

Kuutio visited Kannelmäen palvelutalo, a service house for the elderly in Kannelmäki. The project team had contacted the service house beforehand, while also inviting a group of children from Vanhaisten päiväkoti, a kindergarten nearby, to the service house. The elderly and the children were first told about the project, and then invited to make pictures and messages that would be attached to the table surface of the cube. The artwork was done by drawing and cutting pictures from magazines and by writing short messages.

⁵ Restaurant day: www.restaurantday.com



THE NIGHT OF THE ARTS, KANNELTALO

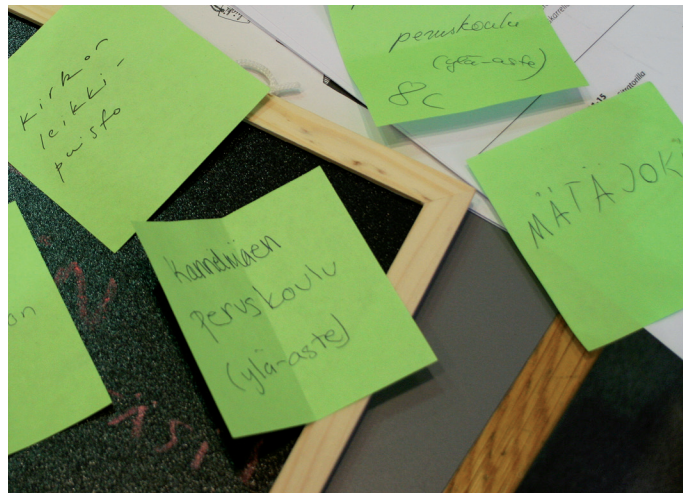
On the 23rd of August, *The night of the Arts*, an annual event when there are art and cultural events all around Helsinki, took place. The project team had planned to be at the terrace by Mätäjoki and have a workshop where people could make origami boats that would be put to float in the river. Due to the unstable weather the project team agreed with the cultural producers of Kanneltalo, that Kuutio could be in the lobby of the cultural centre and the project team would participate in the cultural centre's event for *The night of the Arts*. During the evening people were invited to leave artwork or messages that were attached to the table surface, and they could also learn how to make origami cubes. During "The night of the Arts" people were told about the project and encouraged to visit the last event day, called finissage, which would take place on the upcoming weekend.

FRIDAY 24TH OF AUGUST SURPRISE VISIT

The day before the finissage a surprise visit was made to the terrace by Mätäjoki, with the intent of making the origami-boat installation, which had not been possible the day before. The weather was again quite unstable, so no paper boats could be made. There were however a few visitors and good conversations by the coffee table during the few hours' stay by the river. A friend of the author, who was interested in the project, took his accordion with him and played a few pieces of music during the surprise visit.

SATURDAY 25TH OF AUGUST FINNISSAGE

Throughout the week the residents could leave suggestions for where the last visit of Kuutio should take place. One of the suggestions given was the playground located close to the church of Kannelmäki. The Kuutio-café was placed at a crossing of pedestrian roads beside the playground. The weather was sunny and quite warm so there were people walking by the café throughout the day. Most of the people who stopped by happened to be out walking or were on their way to the playground, but a few had followed the café with help from the posters and the blog, and had explicitly come out for a walk in order to visit the café. While drinking their coffee the visitors were looking at and reading the different messages left in the table and many of them also made their own artwork.



REFLECTION, DAY BY DAY

Starting the event-week by painting the cube in public served as a way to attract the residents' attention, while the collective painting also served as a way to give the residents a feeling of ownership related to the cube project. The project team did not want Kuutio to be something that was served to the residents of Kannelmäki entirely finished, but that residents, at least to some extent, would contribute to the process of making the cube. Deciding to start the journey of Kuutio at Sitratori was a way to relate to the previous steps of the explorations, demonstrating that simple activities at the square can make the atmosphere less hostile. This was again a method for creating an alternative way for the residents of Kannelmäki to consider Sitratori as a place for encounters and activities, rather than as a place to avoid due to its reputation.

The second day of the event week was the international *Restaurant day*. Using the established event *Restaurant day* for the cube café was a way to reach people who had not noticed the posters or the origami cubes. It turned out that many of those who visited the café during this day had seen the notice on the webpages of *Restaurant day*. In a similar way the established event *The night of the Arts*, served as an occasion for the cube project to reach a wider audience. Having the opportunity to be in Kanneltalo during The Night of the Arts was a way to be involved in the cultural centre's activities. Since the cube had been stored in the lobby of Kanneltalo in-between the café events it was now appropriate to let those who visited the cultural centre frequently to see the coffee table folded out.

The visit to the service house was a way to reach a group of residents that would otherwise most likely not have been in contact with the Kuutio-project. By inviting the children from the kindergarten the project team was able to create direct contact between different groups of the area. In this case the meeting created dialogue between different generations. Doing something together, that both the children and the elderly enjoyed, created a good atmosphere and a feeling of collaboration among the participants. The artwork served as a source for conversation, the creators of the artwork were asking and telling each other about their work. The initiative to bring Kuutio to the service house and to invite the children from the kindergarten, seemed appreciated both by the residents of the house and the personnel.

During the surprise visit the music played on accordion attracted the attention of passers-by and created a nice atmosphere around the coffee table. One initial idea with the cube-project was to encourage local actors or organisations to set up activities or performances in relation to the temporary meeting places. Bringing a performer, in this case a musician, was a way to have a more vivid setting, even though the musician was not a local actor. There were people visiting the café throughout the week, but the last day of the series of events was, according to the project team, the most successful one. The weather played a great role





in making it possible for people to stay at ease by the table. The location was good, since there were people passing by throughout the day. People from different parts of Kannelmäki and of different ages gathered around the table and it was obvious that the initiative was appreciated by the participants.

OVERALL REFLECTION

The project was realized with a desire of testing a concept in practice. The project team was curious to see in what way the residents of Kannelmäki would relate to the cube and whether it would be possible to create temporary meeting places with the help of a mobile café. Many of the choices made both during the planning phase and during the realisation, were combinations of thoroughly planned ideas and pure coincidence. Everything did not go exactly as planned, but the nature of coincidence was one important character of the Kuutio-project. Similarly as in the whole series of explorations in this thesis project, the intention with the Kuutio-project was to let the situations and the people who happened to be part of the events shape the nature of the explorations.

During the week the project team noticed that many of the café visitors had seen the origami-cubes and posters that were put up in the area during the summer. When the origami-cubes were spread, passers-by asked about the cubes and this served as a possibility for the project team to tell the local residents about the upcoming event and spread the word about it. When the team walked through Kannelmäki with the trolley they got quite a lot of attention, but only a few people asked what the cube contained. When the coffee table was folded out the team noticed the same thing, people approached the café mostly when the team members themselves were active and welcomed passers-by to have a coffee. The team realized that clear signs close to where the table was folded out, expressing that Kuutio is a mobile café open for everyone, would have been a way to make it easier for passers-by to approach the café.

Even though the initial plans for Kuutio were simplified and all of the events were not carried out exactly as planned due to weather conditions, the team was satisfied with the project. Most of the people, who either came to drink a cup of coffee, talk for a while or to paint the cube, were very positive and encouraging towards the project. By testing the idea in practice the team could see that informal meeting places are possible to create by bringing something out of ordinary into the area. One of the main ideas with the project was to bring people from the area together, and this was partly done in an indirect way, by collecting the artwork and messages which would later be visible to others who came in contact with Kuutio. The help the team got from various stakeholders in the area made it easier for the team to carry out the project, while the different stakeholders served as channels through which the project team could reach local residents. A way to ensure that there would be visitors and participants at the events would have been that of get-

ting a certain group involved in the project at an early phase. This could also have strengthened the feeling of ownership among the residents. However, the way the project was carried out did not link the project to a specific group in the area. This can be seen as an effort to reach as wide an audience as possible.

SYNTHESIS

The third place that Oldenburg (1999) describes as an informal gathering place in a neighbourhood is a place that exists over a long period of time. A place that serves as a regular meeting place in an area needs to be developed over time, as there has to be the possibility for people to return and get familiar with each other during recurrent visits. The Kuutio-project was a temporary setting, a form of experimentation, to try out an idea in practice. It was a way to explore if people can be connected through a café, which is mobile and which encourages participation. During the event week temporary meeting places were created around the mobile café, where encounters among the local residents took place and the reception of the café was positive. Kuutio served as a way to demonstrate the possibility and need for informal meeting places in Kannelmäki.

The temporary informal meeting places created around the mobile café provoked discussion among the visitors about the already existing meeting places in the area and about the lack of informal meeting places. The quest for a community house in Kannelmäki, which was first learned of during *Exploration 1*, was discussed by certain café visitors. The positive reception towards the mobile café revealed an interest among the residents for having a location that can serve as a meeting place that unites the neighbourhood. Kuutio demonstrated a temporary setting that could be developed into something more permanent if there was a fixed location where people of different ages and backgrounds could gather. Oldenburg (1999) discusses the importance of social connections and relationships that are born within local meeting places and their impact on the neighbourhood community. Within this light and based on the insights throughout the set of explorations the social capital within Kannelmäki is likely to grow if the residents are offered the possibility to create a permanent informal meeting place.



RESULTS

Throughout the project the aim was to gain knowledge of how to carry out a design process ~~where the residents of a living area~~ where the residents of an area are involved and where the project is focused on the residents' living environment.

8. Results

This thesis project consists of different layers in which the aim has been to explore the area of participatory design approaches in a local social context, while getting to know the area based on the residents' perceptions and exploring ways to bring people from the area together in order for new forms of collaboration to emerge. Throughout the project the aim was to gain knowledge of how to carry out a design process where the residents of an area are involved and where the project is focused on the residents' living environment. In this chapter the research questions explored throughout the project are answered.

In order to get familiar with the area based on the residents' perceptions, and in order to choose a direction for the process the following question was explored:

1. How do the residents of Kannelmäki perceive their living environment, and what would they like to improve?

Most of the residents that were involved throughout the series of explorations relate to their living environment in positive terms. They are aware of negative attitudes towards the area, but confirm the validity of these attitudes only to a limited extent. The residents consider Kannelmäki a pleasant living environment and they are satisfied with the basic services provided in the area. Positive aspects consequently mentioned by residents are the closeness to the centre of Helsinki and the easy access to different parts of the city by public transportation. People appreciate the green areas and the closeness to nature, while they also appreciate the cultural centre and the library situated in the building called Kanneltalo. There are however feelings of insecurity related to certain parts of the area. Among the different parts of Kannelmäki, the area around the railway station, which includes the square in front of Kanneltalo called Sitratori, is most frequently described as one of the unpleasant areas. The area is described as restless, and people avoid going there because of the insecurity related to the place. Among the aspects residents would like to improve, issues such as more possibilities for social encounters and the reduction of restlessness in certain parts of Kannelmäki were raised. This question was answered mainly through the data gathered during explorations 1 and 2. In addition, the quest for a community house in the area reoccurred throughout the explorations.

While getting familiar with Kannelmäki and finding ways to improve the area in collaboration with the residents, the aim was to build design knowledge through practice-based design research regarding how to carry out a design process in a local social context. The following question looks for answers regarding how this should be done in practice.

2. How should a designer approach the residents of an area, in order to involve them in a design process aimed at making their living environment more liveable?

There most certainly is not one single way to carry out a participatory design process in a local social context. In the explorations done in Kannelmäki the aim was to get to know the area based on the residents' perceptions, then find issues that could be improved according to the opinions of the residents and finally, in collaboration with the residents, take action to change the current situation. Based on the explorations a set of guidelines is presented as a suggestion of how a similar design process can be approached. One apparent aspect of the guidelines is to approach the residents step by step, where the relationship between the designer (or the design team) and the residents is given time to develop. Involving people in a participatory design process concerning their living environment requires *trust* to be built between the designer and the residents, *flexibility* and *openness* to respond and adapt to events and situations throughout the process and *sensitivity* towards the opinions and attitudes of residents. The guidelines add several additional aspects to be taken into account, and serve as a set of practical advice for the designer or for a design team when carrying out a participatory design project in a specific area.

Social relationships within the local context where the design process is carried out are considered to be an important asset when sustainable development is understood as the creation of human wellbeing, and when the transition towards sustainability is seen as a collaborative effort. The capacity of the local community to tackle issues collaboratively depends on the social cohesiveness in the area. Each initiative where residents from the local area are brought together can bring about new social relationships and new forms of collaboration in the local setting. Therefore the following question was focused upon throughout the explorations:

3. What kinds of initiatives can bring people in a suburban area together in order to create a more socially cohesive neighbourhood?

Initiatives highlighting or dealing with a common concern, are an effective way to bring people from an area together. When attempting to create a cohesive neighbourhood with the aim of building capacity to tackle challenges, it is important not to strengthen the social capital within small inward looking groups, but to

instead focus on relationships between different interest groups. Small inward looking groups focusing on their own interests can be damaging for the rest of the residents of an area. Therefore an open form of cohesiveness, where different actors and interest groups can combine their resources, is central when aiming at creating a socially cohesive neighbourhood. The assets within different groups can be combined, as collaboration among different local actors can bring about results which could not have been achieved by working in isolation. The suburban area serves as a residential area and an area for recreation for the majority of people, only a small amount of people work in the area or regularly visit the area even though they do not live there. Therefore it is beneficial to focus on initiatives where aspects occurring in the residents' spare time are affected. Initiatives that raise issues that a wide variety of people can relate to, and that the residents consider important or meaningful in their everyday life, are effective ways to bring people together.

DiSCUSSION

Open versus focused

New design knowledge

Who is the creative expert?

Guidelines

Can an initiative be too small?

9. Discussion

As proposed by Manzini (2006, 2007, 2009) and Fuad-Luke (2007), the transition towards sustainability should be seen as a collaborative effort. When sustainable development is understood as the creation of human wellbeing, as suggested by Giddigs et al. (2002), it becomes imperative to explore the concept in a local setting, since wellbeing can have rather different meanings in different contexts. The approach to wellbeing proposed within this thesis is an active form of wellbeing, which, according to Manzini (2007, 248), considers people as actors rather than passive subjects. These viewpoints led the author to consider participatory design approaches in a local social setting to be a promising direction for how to carry out a design process within the area of sustainable design. Even though many design researchers agree that stakeholder involvement is essential in sustainable design, there is a lack of examples of how the involvement is to be done in practice, especially when the design project focuses on a specific local context. The explorations were carried out with the intention of gaining an understanding of how to put the promising ideas into practice. The aim was to understand the ways in which a designer could collaborate with people in a local social setting.

OPEN VERSUS FOCUSED

Throughout the explorations, the main objective was to find ways in which to involve the local residents in the design process, and to create something with the residents rather than for them. The process started out with an open approach, where the aim was to get familiar with the area and understand its characteristics, while involving the residents in an early phase of the process. Gradually the initiatives were focused towards certain directions, based on what was found out. It was challenging to find the balance between how open or focused the approach should be. When local people were involved in the process, they wanted to know what the design process was concerned with. This was difficult especially in the beginning of the process, since the aim was to remain open and let the input from the residents guide the process further. In many cases it was enough to explain that the explorations were related to a design project in Aalto University, in which the area of Kannelmäki was focused upon. Some people wanted to know more precisely what the outcome would be and expectations related to the physical environment revealed the notion of the designer as someone who is concerned with products or the built environment. Throughout the process the author recognized the contrast between how she, and many other designers consider their role, to that of how people encountered during the process related to the designer-role.

WHO IS THE CREATIVE EXPERT?

Certain attitudes towards the design profession and expectations of particular outcomes as a result of the design process made it challenging to find local partners to collaborate with and to involve residents in the process. Even though the residents were throughout the explorations considered as *everyday people*, who, as explained by Sanders (2006a), are experts of their own experiences, they did not always consider themselves as experts. The residents approached were most often willing to share their opinions, but they were not always comfortable with participating in a greater extent to the activities related to the explorations. The expectations of certain outcomes to be delivered to the area as an outcome of the design process showed that people do not yet consider themselves as the active contributors in shaping their living environment. Sanders and Stappers (2008) discuss the challenge of changing the roles within the design process, since the difficulty is not only related to an unwillingness of those who are in power to give it up, it is also related to whether those who are aimed for to be involved in the process consider themselves as creative or not. Despite the difficulty of convincing residents that they should themselves be those who are actively contributing to shaping the kind of neighbourhood they would like to live in, the creative efforts done throughout the explorations showed that when people are actively making things themselves it is easier to work alongside them.

When people expressed themselves through making a collage (exploration 3) or by contributing in the painting of the chairs (exploration 6) and the cube (exploration 7), it was easier for both the designer and the participants to meet on an equal level. When people were approached in the streets or asked to fill in question notes there was a certain distance between the designer and the residents. The levels of creativity described by Sanders (2006a) *doing, adapting, making and creating* related to the degree of distance between the designer and the residents throughout the process. When the residents were *doing* productive efforts, such as answering questions or filling in question notes, the level of creativity was rather low and the distance between the designer and the residents remained. When the residents had the opportunity to *adapt*, or *make*, the distance between the designer and the residents grew smaller and the residents came closer to taking the role of an expert. In the series of explorations the level of creating was not reached, as the involvement of residents within the explorations required certain frameworks. This is probably related to expectations of the designer's role, as he or she is still considered to be the creative expert among many of the *everyday people* who actually are potential creators. The level of creating without any predefined task is likely to take place only after the designer has left the setting, when the residents are themselves taking the initiative to make things happen in their own living environment. Perhaps it is only at the stage when the designer has triggered a certain interest among the residents and leaves the setting that the residents start to con-

sider themselves as the experts of their living environment who have the potential and responsibility to contribute to the development of their environment.

CAN AN INITIATIVE BE TOO SMALL?

The initiatives done in this thesis project served as ways for finding out how a designer can work with residents, but also as ways to improve existing circumstances. When setting out to affect certain local issues in collaboration with the residents, it was hard to foresee how the residents would consider the initiatives and what the impact would be. When designing in a social context it is impossible to plan the process or initiatives too strictly beforehand. The *sense and respond* approach suggested by Thackara (2005) proved to be an appropriate method, in which small steps could be done while carefully sensing the reactions and responding to them through the next step. Throughout the explorations the author was faced with the difficulty of knowing what is worth doing, and how to justify an action aiming at positive impact, especially when the impact is difficult to measure. The initiatives set out to improve the current situation during the series of explorations acted as temporary settings where the residents were invited to be involved. These initiatives were done with the belief in the potential of small actions to have far-reaching consequences. Despite the difficulty of knowing exactly how the initiatives affected the area, after having carried out the series of explorations it seems that rather small initiatives and temporary settings can have a positive impact on how the living environment is perceived among the residents. Each initiative can be seen as a positive example and can inspire further initiatives to emerge.

KANNELMÄKI-LIIKE: A POSITIVE INITIATIVE

Bridger & Luloff (1999) explain how a common concern in the area can act as a source of discussion and can be a starting point in community development. In Kannelmäki the quest for a community house acted as the common concern, which gave birth to a group that now calls itself Kannelmäki-liike. The group is actively addressing issues in their neighbourhood and their Facebook-page acts as a communication channel among various actors in the area. There are similar groups in other parts of Helsinki, for example Kallio-liike and Töölö-liike. These groups have inspired the residents of Kannelmäki to form a group of their own. It is likely that the explorations done in Kannelmäki as part of this thesis, have had a role in inspiring and triggering the birth of Kannelmäki-liike. When the group was forming the author was contacted and it was suggested that she could be involved in the community-house initiative. Even though, at the time of writing, there is still no community house in Kannelmäki, the Kannelmäki-liike has succeeded in bringing together various actors from the area to collaborate on local concerns. The invitation to the author to be involved at the beginning of their journey showed

that the explorations had at least attracted positive attention in the neighbourhood, and hopefully also contributed to inspiring and catalysing further initiatives. In a similar manner to the author having been inspired by previous grass-roots initiatives done in other parts of Helsinki, the explorations had potential to inspire the residents of Kannelmäki.

THE DESIGNER AS A FACILITATOR OF SOCIAL GATHERINGS

One of the aspects considered throughout the explorations was how to build a more socially cohesive area. According to Porritt (2005, 152) a socially cohesive community can better tackle challenges. This is an important aspect when considering the challenges related to sustainable development. Whether the area became more cohesive was not explored in this thesis, as the focus was rather on how a designer can have a role in bringing people together in order for new social relationships to emerge. As noted by Field (2008, 132-156), social capital cannot easily be measured nor created. However designers can facilitate initiatives where social encounters are made possible, even though social capital is hard to consciously build. The Kannelmäki-liike serves as one promising initiative where possibilities for local collaboration to emerge are offered. Online platforms can serve as a way to bring people together in the offline world. Despite this effort there is still a need for further informal meeting places in the area, where people can gather without predefined reasons and where social encounters can lead to a more socially cohesive neighbourhood.

FINDING PARTNERS

The explorations succeeded in involving residents of the area, but finding partners with whom to work with over a longer period of time, not only through a certain exploration, proved to be difficult. Even though the designer, as noted by Fuad-Luke (2007, 46), considers the whole society as its client within co-design, the designer should not forget that there should be a way to earn a living through the projects done. In order to find partners to work along with, or work for, the designer needs to be able to explain what the intention with the project in question is. As designing with people in a local context, where the whole process is guided by those involved, is an emerging design area where only few examples exist, it is not easy to shortly and convincingly explain why this sort of work should be done. This was especially challenging throughout the project, as the author herself was only gradually starting to understand the particular design area through the explorations. Even though it is hard to state what the exact impacts of creative local community efforts are, appropriate ways to justify the importance of similar design processes are needed. In this thesis project the focus remained on involving residents in the design process, since this proved in itself a wide subject. In this case

one important aspect was to explore a promising direction for the designer, but continuing in this direction would require finding ways to explain why this kind of design should be done and what the possible impacts are. Working with a certain partner could also make it easier to involve residents, since this could convince them that the project is not done only as an exploration, but with the intention of generating a positive impact.

NEW DESIGN KNOWLEDGE

The area of design for sustainable development in a local context is vast, and each project can provide new insights. Since this context is complicated, it is important that the knowledge produced is shared among designers. The designers, and not only those who are professional designers, but everyone who is concerned with design projects, should share their insights and experiences for what Manzini (2009) calls *new design knowledge* to be produced effectively. Each project carried out will be different since design, as Manzini (2009) describes, is based on subjective criteria combined with creativity. When participatory design approaches are used within a local context the process and results will differ according to place, time, and the people involved at that specific time. However, insights from various projects can be adapted and appropriated to a specific context. Based on the learning experience within the design process described in this thesis, there are aspects the author finds useful for other designers to consider, when entering an area with the aim of involving residents in a design process focusing on their living environment. The guidelines can be adapted to different contexts and are intended for situations where the issues to be focused upon within the design process are articulated and addressed in collaboration with the residents.

GUIDELINES:

HOW TO CARRY OUT A DESIGN PROCESS IN A LOCAL SOCIAL SETTING

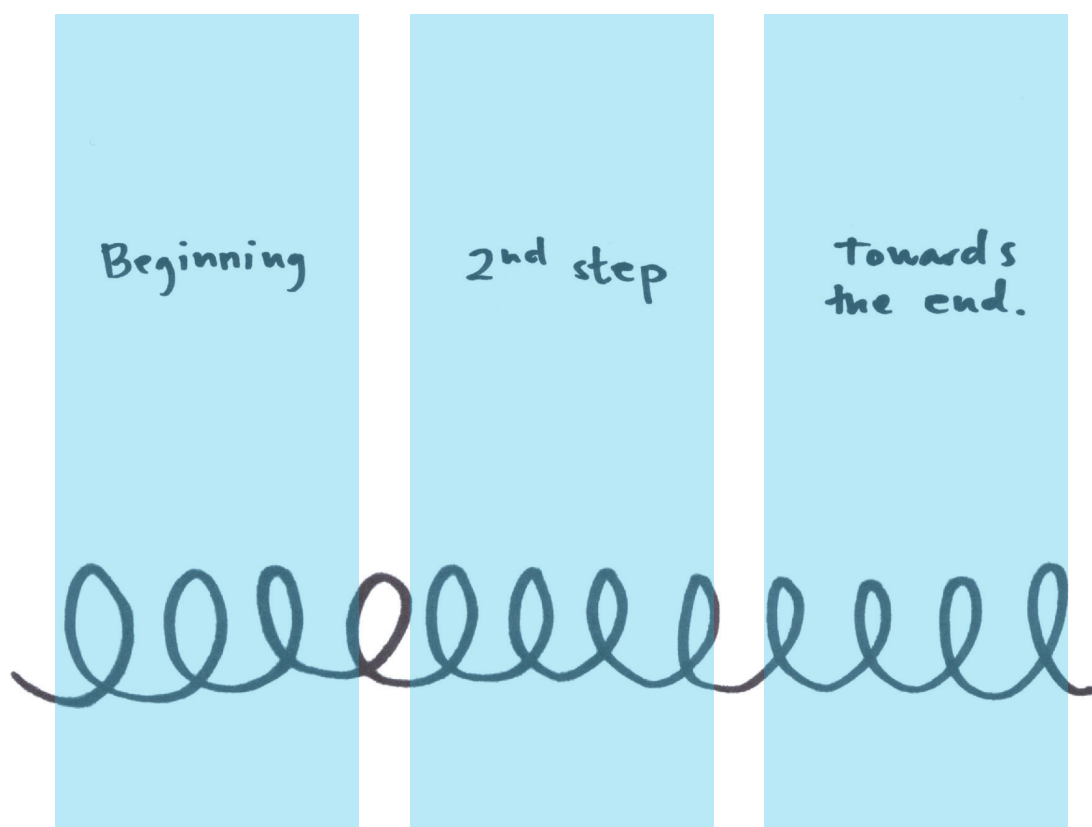


FIGURE 9: VISUALIZATION OF WHERE THE GUIDELINES CAN BE PLACED IN THE DESIGNPROCESS. THE PROCESS IS HERE SEEN AS GENERIC AND ON-GOING.

-DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET STARTED (*BEGINNING*)

The process will have to start somewhere, it can be challenging to take the first step, therefore it is here suggested to start with a simple effort where the designer can start by sensing the area, while getting to know the area little by little. Within a process where the very nature of the design project is articulated in collaboration with the residents, the first step will be to get familiar with the context. It is beneficial to spend some time in the area while trying to map different resources. It will be easier to explore the context while being present and while doing something practical in the area. Small actions can generate encounters with local people who can provide the designer or the design team with beneficial information. Each encounter with local people, be it based on pre-arranged meetings or spontaneous encounters in the streets, will help in getting to know the area based on the residents' perceptions.

-CONNECT WITH LOCALS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING AND CONSIDER THEM EXPERTS (*BEGINNING*)

The residents are the experts of their living area, the context within which the project is to take place will best be understood by listening to the opinions of the residents. Listening to the opinions of the locals makes it easier to understand what it is like to live in the area, and what the strengths and weaknesses in the area are. Creating connections and building trust takes time, the earlier this process is started the easier it will be to involve local people further on in the project. Considering the residents as experts within the design process not only helps in getting to know the perceptions of the people who live in the area, it also makes it easier to involve people in the design process. If the residents are considered to be the experts it is more likely that they will take ownership of the design process, than if the designer considers him- or herself as an expert. Being on an equal level with the people one is working with, and stepping out from the comfort zone of being the designer-expert is essential when working with people in a local setting.

-FIND LOCAL KEY PEOPLE (*BEGINNING*)

Local key people are a valuable resource both in the beginning of the process, whilst getting to know how things in the area work, and further on as a link to other residents. The key people are active individuals often involved in associations and projects in the area. By mapping the resources in the area, the key people can most likely be found through these resources. By connecting with key people it is easier to build trust with other community members as the active individuals usually have good social networks within the area and are considered reliable. Therefore being introduced by a local key person makes it more likely that residents will be interested in getting involved in the design project, as opposed to if the people in the area do not have any personal reference point to the designer.

-BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR OWN ROLE (*BEGINNING*)

Even though the designers' role is continuously changing, people outside the design profession often see designers as professionals who are focused on designing products or planning the built environment. When the intention is to collaborate with the residents and find propositions for improvement, it is important to explain this clearly already at the beginning of the process. When carrying out a design process in a local social context the designer might only act as a facilitator, aiming at encouraging participation even if the outcome is not necessarily anything tangible. The more one has reflected upon one's own designer-role, the easier it will be to explain this role to the people encountered throughout the project.

-BE VISIBLE (*IN THE BEGINNING AND THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS*)

By various forms of visibility one can attract people's attention and let people know about the design project in question. Posters are a common and easy way to distribute information, but more surprising methods can be beneficial. Curiosity about surprising things in the neighbourhood can attract residents' attention. Sometimes strangeness can be a positive way to provoke discussion with and among the residents of an area. One of the designers special skills is creativity, creative efforts to attracting attention are often an appreciated way to more easily reach residents spontaneously than through traditional information spreading.

-BE WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE (*2ND STEP*)

When setting up an event where the aim is to reach the residents, start with a place where people frequently go, even though this place might be associated to certain values or visited by a certain group of people. Approaching people at a place where they usually spend time will be much easier than trying to invite people to a special place where they do not usually go. Keep in mind that only a certain amount and type of people is likely to be reached through a certain type of event. Trying different places is beneficial if the aim is to connect with a wide variety of different people from the area.

-BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN WHAT YOU ARE DOING (*2ND STEP*)

When entering an area and approaching people they will most likely ask what the project is about, so be prepared to shortly and clearly explain who you are, why you are in the area and what your main intentions with your project are. Even though it is beneficial to remain open, and let the residents' opinions guide the process, the people you encounter will most likely appreciate and more willingly collaborate if you can give them an understandable explanation of what the aim of your project is.

-GIVE SOMETHING IN RETURN (2ND STEP)

When gathering data and getting to know the residents' perceptions about the area it is useful to bring something to the events that can benefit the participants. Getting to know the area can be done in various ways and it is beneficial to try different methods. When the design process focuses on improving the area, the improvements can be started with small actions while still getting to know the area. Setting up an event where data is gathered through interviews or as a workshop, can be done in a way that benefits those who participate. A workshop can be a way to bring residents together to address a common concern in order to create new connections and to have an enjoyable time.

-USE DIFFERENT APPROACHES (THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS)

Try different approaches throughout the process. Approaching people on the street, setting up an event where people are invited to or starting a project where you meet the same group of people several times are all very different ways of collaborating with the residents and serve different purposes. Throughout the process it is worth trying various approaches in order to reach different kinds of people. Within any group the participants have different preferences for how to express themselves. Preparing different ways of taking part in the activities gives everyone willing the possibility to participate. Some might prefer to express their ideas visually, while others rather write or discuss.

-BE OPEN, FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE (THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS)

People who are involved in the design process will most likely want to know what the project is about and what the aims of the project are. By openly demonstrating the nature of the project, the residents have the opportunity to follow the development of the design process. This can be done for example through a webpage or a blog, where the design process, efforts and reflections are updated throughout the process. In this way people will have a possibility to learn about other residents' perceptions of their area, comment or get involved in the project. It is also worth considering ways for demonstrating the design process offline, since all people do not necessarily use online platforms actively.

When aiming at designing with people, flexibility is crucial, since it is hard to foresee how things will go. Openness and flexibility can also be ways to more efficiently involve the residents in the process, by letting their ideas guide the process. Unexpected things will most likely happen during the process. If something happens that was not planned for, try to adapt and have a back-up plan or strategy. In many cases unexpected things are not necessarily negative, try to turn the unexpected into something that benefits the process.

-BE AN EXAMPLE (*TOWARDS THE END*)

While finding out attitudes and ideas for improvement in an area, one way to get people to take action for improving their living environment is to show example. Carrying out an initiative where some aspect is improved, even temporarily, can inspire residents to make similar initiatives. Each action performed can lead to new sets of actions.

**-INVOLVE LOCAL RESOURCES AND HIGHLIGHT STRENGTHS
(*TOWARDS THE END*)**

When creating a suggestion for how to improve the area, it is beneficial to involve already existing local resources. This is a way to highlight strengths in the area and can act as a way to create new connections among already existing resources. It is more likely that there will be a continuation to the initiative in question if local people and resources are involved. Involvement also creates a feeling of ownership of the initiative among the residents.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiatives done showed that common concerns in a neighbourhood can bring people from a suburban area together.

10. Conclusions

The explorations done in Kannelmäki showed that the residents who were involved throughout the process are satisfied with the basic services in their living environment, but experience a feeling of insecurity in certain parts of the area and a lack of informal social meeting places. More possibilities for informal social gatherings can be a way to tackle the issues related to the feeling of insecurity. Since social connections are vital to all living areas, designers can act as catalysts for local collaboration to emerge by creating opportunities for social encounters to take place. The initiatives done showed that common concerns in the neighborhood can bring people from a suburban area together. Each initiative taken can bring about further initiatives and make it possible for new forms of collaboration to emerge.

The explorations done proved that working with people in a local social context is a complex process. There are no predefined steps to be taken, but giving time for trust to develop, adapting and responding to the context, in addition to sensitivity, are important aspects throughout the process. The description of the explorations and the design guidelines serve as design knowledge, that can benefit other designers and that should be built upon. The guidelines presented focus mainly on how to involve the residents of an area in a design process. Further research is needed about how to demonstrate the importance of similar initiatives in order to find partners to work with throughout the process.

Within this thesis it is argued that the transition towards sustainability should be seen as a collaborative effort. The area of participatory design approaches has potential to create opportunities for diverse actors to collaboratively articulate the issues that should be addressed in sustainable development on a local level. When seen from a design perspective, designers should more actively collaborate with people outside the design profession, as well as with each other. Designers can and should learn from each other and consider not only sustainability, but also the development of the design field, a collaborative effort. Each initiative taken within the local social context can produce new design knowledge, while serving as an example for the rest of the society for how design can act as a way of catalysing the potential that exists within a neighbourhood.

APPENDICES

11. Appendices

APPENDIX 1:

DESIGNING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

(Thackara 2005, 211-226)

FROM BLUEPRINT AND PLAN TO SENSE AND RESPOND.

The top-down or outside-in approach often taken within traditional design does not work when designing complex systems since the systems evolve while they are being re-designed. A sense and respond approach is needed, where the designer is responsive to events in their context. Understanding how systems work and what stimulates them requires sensitivity. Instead of imposing design *on* the world designing should be done *in* the world.

FROM HIGH CONTEXT TO DEEP CONTEXT.

Context is important when designing in the space of flows, therefore a more sensitive approach to the contexts of people and networks should be developed. Consequences of design actions should be considered carefully, as small changes to systems can make things better, just as small changes can make things worse. Designers should act lightly, sense the feedback and then act again. Systems and networks should be designed small and then gradually be developed: this is how systems in nature usually evolve.

TOP DOWN TO SEEDING EDGE EFFECT.

While people for the time being mostly work within communities, there should be a bigger emphasis on the work carried out in-between communities. In order to understand what should be designed the connections to the edge are important, otherwise products that are not really needed will continuously be designed. The collaboration in-between different areas is essential if new ideas are to emerge. New relationships and connections should be envisioned. Ideas and tools that already exist can be combined and used in new ways and new contexts.

FROM BLANK SHEET OF PAPER TO SMART RECOMBINATION.

Everything does not need to be designed from scratch, there already exists a variety of smart ways of doing things. Instead of trying to come up with a unique idea, designers should spend more time looking at already existing solutions. Learning from the world is an effective tool for innovation, while new relationships among people, ideas and organizations also foster innovation.

FROM SCIENCE FICTION TO SOCIAL FICTION.

Innovation is often related to science dominated futures, however, innovations should focus instead on social fiction where new contexts are imagined in a familiar world. People should be designed into future scenarios rather than be replaced or disabled by technology.

FROM DESIGNING FOR TO DESIGNING WITH.

Designers should no longer think of people as users or consumers, but rather as actors. Remarkable achievements and development are often the result of collaboration. Collaborative design is about finding ways to share a vision of a system among its actors and stakeholders while the system changes.

FROM DESIGNING AS PROJECT TO DESIGNING AS SERVICE.

Traditional design has been about form and function. The new design approach should however focus on the process rather than the outcome. Design can be seen as a process that continuously defines a system's rules. The new services and infrastructures will take place among organizations developing new systems.

APPENDIX 2

EXPLORATION 2: STORYTELLING INTERVIEWS

QUESTION 1:

The first question “*How would you describe the word neighbourhood?*” was confusing to many of the interviewees and needed clarification. Several interviewees started to talk about their own neighbourhood. One interviewee stated; “*Where I live myself, it is wonderful.*” (woman 44 years old), when the question was clarified; “*But on a more general level, if you don’t think about your own neighbourhood, then what does the word mean to you?*” the woman answered “*Caring for another.*” Here the respondent associates the word neighbourhood to other people, but also to how people behave towards one another. Out of these eight interviews the answer to the first question regarded people in all interviews but one. In some of the answers it was possible to see the direct association to the current neighbourhood, even though the answer regarded how the person understood the word. “*I live in an apartment building, so the people from your own stairway...those who live in the same building.*” (woman 73 years old), here the respondent describes her current neighbourhood in order to explain what the word means to her. In addition to people, this woman also refers to the physical environment, the stairway and the building.

The only person who does not include people in the answer regarding how to describe the word neighbourhood describes it as “*...the same house, the same staircase...*” (man, 62 years old). He refers only to the physical environment, to those living in the same building, even narrowing it down to the staircase. Compared to some of the other answers, this can be seen as a rather concrete and narrow way to describe a word that in many cases seem to have multi-layered meanings. When the respondent was asked whether there are other things that he associates with the word he says “*I am not...I am not too social.*” This answer reflects that he is probably aware of the fact that neighbourhood is often related, not only to the environment where one lives, but also to the other people in the area, the neighbours.

Most of the interviewees talk about other people as a positive trait, they emphasize the importance to have good neighbours, to care for another, as previously mentioned, and the sense of community. One respondent describes neighbourhood as “*Neighbourhood. Well, that is the people living close by, the people which whom you are dealing with, or who are an inevitable evil.*” (woman, 49 years old) Here the respondent clearly sheds light on the fact that one might not be able to choose one’s neighbours. The neighbourhood clearly links to the people living there, the neighbours, but dealing with them might not always be something joyful. Sometimes one deals with one’s neighbours due to a lack of choice in the matter, in other cases one might want to avoid certain neighbours. Nevertheless a neighbourhood also consists of the others living in the area, whether the sense of community or caring for others is central or not.

One interviewee answers the question by asking *"Doesn't it mean those neighbours there, and then the area?"* and continues, *"Like this territory that I have there."* (man, 65 years old). When the answer is clarified by asking *"So it is an area and also the people?"* the respondent answers, again with a question, *"Isn't the neighbourhood also the territory, at least the animals have their territory."* Here, the respondent points out the importance of seeing neighbourhood not only as consisting of people, but as an area, and as he refers to the word *"territory"* and compares neighbourhood to the fact that animals have their territory, he gives a hint of the view of neighbourhood as an area belonging to those living in that particular area.

Taking the concept of belonging further, it is possible to assume that those who have a feeling of the area being their *"territory"* might experience, not only that the area, or the neighbourhood, belongs to them, but that they belong to the neighbourhood. The sense of community, which was mentioned in several interviews, might spring from a common concern, a common area, consisting of the physical environment and the people living within it. One respondent who emphasized the importance of the sense of community continued by describing *"...and, the neighbourhood, you have to take care of it yourself, and I suppose others also take care. In the neighbourhood a lot depends on whether you want to live there or not."* (woman, 51 years old) The woman expresses the need to take care of one's neighbourhood, and that others should do so as well. A sense of community can be related to how much people in an area take care of their neighbourhood together, and to the subjective experience of how much the others care for the neighbourhood. *"Taking care of"* certainly means different things to different people, it can be assumed that the sense of community is strong in neighbourhoods where the neighbours have a similar view of what *"taking care of"* means and what it is that needs to be taken care of. In addition, the feeling of having chosen a particular area to be one's neighbourhood is likely to increase the motivation to take care of it.

The question *"How would you describe the word neighbourhood?"* having caused some confusion might be due to the difficulty of defining the word in a simple manner. As Kearns & Parkinson (2001) remark, neighbourhood cannot be interpreted in one single way and different areas serve different functions while different individuals have different expectations of their neighbourhood. In these interviews, the people being from the same area, the functions of the area are rather similar for the respondents, even though Kannelmäki does consist of several smaller districts. In many of the interviews the respondent referred to his or her own neighbourhood, which probably is due to the difficulty of seeing the concept neighbourhood objectively. Neighbourhood is related to the place where one lives, and is therefore based on personal perceptions. The answers, where neighbourhood is described as an area through both the physical and the social aspects is in line with how Richardson & Mumford (2002) describe neighbourhood as a social system, consisting of both the people and the place.

QUESTION 2

The second question involved the pictures that were chosen to facilitate the storytelling and get rich answers regarding the respondent's attitudes towards "*neighbourhood*". Within the questions planned beforehand, the question was articulated as: "*Can you choose the picture that best describes, or that you associate with your ideal neighbourhood?*" But as it was realized that the participants in many cases wanted to choose several pictures, the question was reformulated slightly, into: "Could you choose some of these pictures that somehow describe your dream or ideal neighbourhood?" When the interviewees were asked to choose a picture they often started to describe what was portrayed in the picture, then moving over to what the pictures signified for them. In some of the interviews supporting questions, such as, why did you choose this picture, why is this aspect important to you, had to be made, in order to get the respondent to talk about his or her own perceptions in addition to the description of what was seen in the picture.

In the interviews pictures 1 and 15 were most frequently chosen. These pictures were chosen in 3 of the interviews. The pictures 2, 6, and 10 were chosen in two interviews each. One participant who chose both the pictures most frequently chosen, number 1 and 15, described picture number 1 in the following way: "*...this is the kind of cohesion that one is looking for these days. So this is exactly that. People are making...yes, people are together.*" (woman, 64 years old). The woman continued by describing picture number 15, "*Well, the same, this could be the party of an apartment building. So this is also this same kind of social cohesion. The same, but a different picture.*". Another interviewee who chose picture number 15 also interpreted the picture as a party of those living in the same house, when asked why this is an important aspect in the ideal neighbourhood the answer was "*Well, isn't it in this kind of community, then isn't it the feeling of belonging, yes.*" (man, 65 years old). The same person had in the previous answer talked about neighbourhood as the people and the "*territory*". It seems that at least for this person the assumption about neighbourhood not only being an area belonging to those who live in that particular area, but also the aspect of those living in the area experiencing a feeling of belonging to the area holds true.

One interviewee who chose picture number 1 pointed out the aspect of social cohesion and how residents of small houses often organize community efforts and different kinds of parties. The same interviewee said that "*A wonderful way to live in the city would be that there would be as much acquaintances as possible.*" (woman, 70 years old). She then continued and compared the city-life to that of a township, saying that it goes to the other extent when people ask "*what did you do yesterday at two, in the night when there were lights?*" According to her, here in Helsinki people do not ask about similar things. Probably this woman had lived in the countryside or in a township previously in her life, since she seemed very aware of the differences between life in Helsinki and smaller places. Also, her way

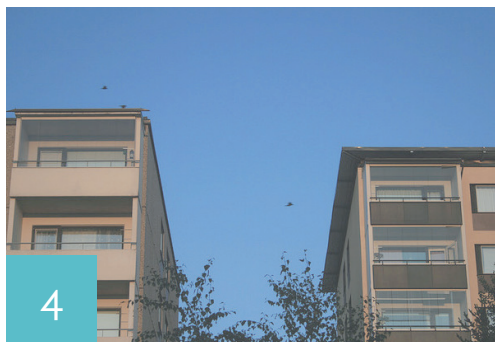
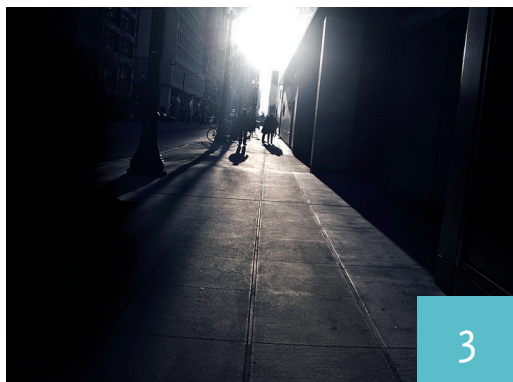
of talking about the city-life could reveal that she lived in a smaller place or in the countryside earlier, since other people from Kannelmäki did not describe the area as a city-environment. Her answer also reflects the desire of having a lot of social contacts, but simultaneously having the possibility for privacy.

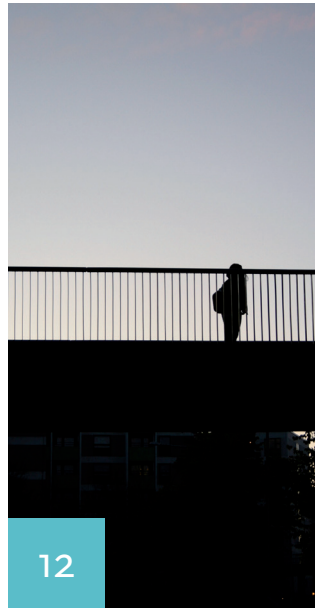
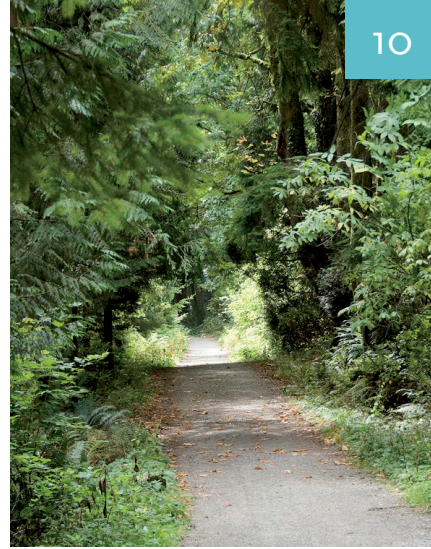
The balance between having your own space, being able to mind your own business, as opposed to having the possibility to interact with others when desired, became evident in many of the interviews. The participants who chose picture number 8, in order to describe their ideal neighbourhood, both touched upon this issue. One of them explained, *"...if you think for example of your home, there should be the possibility for repose and quality, and also this kind of possibility to be in contact with the neighbourhood and neighbours if you like, but you can also be alone."* (woman, 51 years old). The other interviewee put it in a slightly different way, when asked what the picture represents to her, *"Silent, calm place. There is nature, forest, water, possibility for sports, possibility for recreation, but also this tranquillity of your own. So the neighbour can be there behind the forest, but you do not see him."* (woman, 49 years old). Both of these interviewees pointed out the tranquillity and the nature, these were reoccurring themes in a majority of the interviews. The interviewees' ideal neighbourhood is similar to the findings made by Kortteinen & al. (2005), where tranquillity and nature were among the five most important aspects in the living environment among the residents of Helsinki.

Similarly as in the first question regarding what the word neighbourhood means, the interviewees emphasized the importance of social contacts, social cohesion and sense of community when choosing pictures regarding the ideal neighbourhood. It is worth mentioning that several of the pictures displayed during the interview did show people, often doing things together, which might of course have affected the extent to which the interviewees chose these pictures. On the other hand pictures related to neighbourhood naturally entail people, since neighbourhoods are forms of social systems. According to the findings made by Kortteinen & al. (2005) the reason for the willingness of moving to another area, among the residents of Helsinki, is related to the perceived restlessness and insecurity. These aspects are related to the other neighbours and how you perceive your neighbours, whether there is a sense of community or not. In many cases the reason for experiencing the feeling of insecurity might spring from the unknown. The emphasized aspect of doing things together and knowing your neighbours can be related to the feeling of security, since knowing the ones one lives beside and having the feeling of belonging can increase the perceived feeling of security.

QUESTION 3

The third question, *"Can you choose one picture that describes, or that you associate with your current neighbourhood?"* was, as the previous question, reframed in most of the interviews as, *"Could you choose some of these pictures that somehow describe,*





or that you can associate with your dream neighbourhood?" This part of the interview was in most of the cases dealt with more briefly than the previous part. Partly because there were also the question notes, and some information was already gained about the residents' perceptions of their neighbourhood through discussions with residents during *Exploration 1*. It also seemed that the participants were more eager to talk about their ideal neighbourhood than their current one, perhaps it was easier to talk about a topic where you could let your imagination flow.

The picture that was chosen most frequently was number 11, chosen in four of the eight interviews. Pictures number 4, 14 and 9 were chosen in two interviews each, while pictures 10 and 13 were both chosen in one interview each. Some of the pictures were taken in Kannelmäki. The participants might have looked for familiar pictures from their living environment, even though the intention with the question was that the participant would associate, not necessarily choose a picture that was actually taken in the area. Picture number 11 was taken in Kannelmäki, but the view is quite familiar to any suburban area in Helsinki. Also, picture number 9 was a photo from the area, this picture, showing a bus-stop from the area, with the name of the bus-stop clearly showing was of course easily recognizable by the interviewees.

The participants choosing number 10, emphasized the greenery, the closeness to nature, in addition to walking and biking lanes close to where they live. These aspects were presented as positive ones. Picture number 9 was by the two interviewees presented in a rather different light, the first interviewee recognized the name of the bus-stop and happened to live close by. The other interviewee described the picture as *"...freedom to change surroundings."* (woman, 51 years old) she then continued by explaining that "when you jump on the bus you get somewhere else." Here she emphasizes both the need for the service, to have buses to take you elsewhere, but also the need to change one's surroundings once in a while. When the interview was done, the woman stayed and talked more about the negative sides of the neighbourhood, about why she sometimes really has an urge to go elsewhere. It was asked if recording could continue, and she explained *"there are too many pubs, restlessness and those kinds of things that do not revitalize the people or create cosiness in the living environment."*

Most of the interviewees talked rather positively about their neighbourhood, describing the closeness to nature, the tranquillity and peacefulness, but the restlessness and the large quantity of pubs were aspects raised by several interviewees. The negative aspects were mostly raised at the end of the interview, in some cases even after the recorder had been switched off. At the end of one interview the interviewee stated that, *"it is a calm area, even though people keep saying bad things about Kannelmäki."* (man, 65 years old) the wife of this man had come to sit beside him and concluded, *"It is evident that each one is defending their own home, home district."* Most of the interviewees seemed to be aware of the fact that there are some nega-

tive rumours and attitudes towards this area, but they wanted rather to highlight the positive sides of the area, than to talk about the negative sides. Going back to the link between the area belonging to those who live there and the feeling of belonging, or attachment to a place, it seems rather natural that having this feeling of belonging, the neighbourhood becomes something quite personal that you do not want to be talked about in a bad way. The area of Kannelmäki is rather diverse, with an old side being regarded as a calm area with small houses and a new area with blockhouses considered more restless. Most of the participants had lived in Kannelmäki for quite long, and seemed to be living on the old side, this might also affect their view on their neighbourhood being considered as calm and peaceful. The way residents described their neighborhood in the interviews, entailed similar aspects as had been found in the information gathered prior to the Syö & kerro event.

APPENDIX 3

EXPLORATION 7: DESCRIPTION OF THE KUUTIO-EVENT WEEK

18TH OF AUGUST 2012 OPENING; PAINTING THE CUBE AT SITRATORI

The opening-event of Kuutio was a Saturday, during which the cube was painted collectively at Sitratori. Painting the cube in public served as a way to attract attention, while the collective painting also served as a way to give the residents a feeling of ownership. The project team did not want Kuutio to be something that is served to the residents of Kannelmäki entirely finished, but that they at least to some extent would have the opportunity to contribute to the process of making the cube. Some people passing by were curious about what was being done, while others were not too eager to participate. People approached the team to ask about what was happening, but there were also many who did not dare to ask anything, even though they observed the painting operation from a distance. It would have been good to have a sign with a description of Kuutio in addition to an invitation to participate, as thus the barrier for finding out what the painting-event was about would have been lower. A few of those who approached the project team at Sitratori had seen the cube in the lobby of Kanneltalo, where it had been for a few days before the opening-event, or read the posters that were distributed around the area prior to the event. Therefore they already knew a little bit about Kuutio.

A couple of mothers came to paint the cube with their children, and one of the mothers said that everything that revitalizes the urban environment is welcomed. One young woman painted a tree and a small boy filled it out with apples. Some people seemed suspicious because coffee was given away for free. The team did not want to sell the coffee, since they would actually have needed a permission for that, and they also thought that free coffee could attract participants. But since giving away coffee for free seemed to provoke suspicion about being obliged to get involved in the project, a voluntary fee for the coffee was introduced during the other days.

19TH OF AUGUST RESTAURANT DAY

The second day was during *Restaurant day*, when Kuutio visited three different places in Kannelmäki. Despite the weather there were customers, their positive attitude towards the project gave the feeling that it was truly worth carrying it out. It was a valuable day and the team could only imagine how it would have been if the weather had been sunnier.

The very first customer for the day was a friend of the team who surprised them by paying the café a visit. The spot for the café was perfect, in a park area in between houses, having trees as shelter from the rain. This place is normally frequently crossed by pedestrians and bikers. This day only a few crossed, probably

due to the rain. One woman walked past and she was asked to stop for a coffee. She stayed and chatted for a while. She said that she first thought the coffee table was someone's private picnic spot. When she left she thanked the team and said it was nice to have a spontaneous chat.

When the team walked around Kannelmäki with the Kuutio they got quite a lot of attention, but only a few asked what the trolley contained. When the team arrived at their second spot for the day, there were three girls watching the cube with curiosity from underneath their umbrellas while the team was unpacking the cube. They walked back and forth and after a while they approached the project team and asked when the café place was going to open. Their mum had told them about Kuutio, and encouraged them to visit. After a while a woman that had been involved in the previous initiatives visited the café and spent the rest of the day with the project team, while encouraging passers-by to stop for a coffee.

A younger woman, who was out jogging, stopped at the café. She had seen the posters for Kuutio, and was curious to hear more about the project. She talked very warmly about Kannelmäki. As many others had been saying throughout the project, she said that the reputation of the area is not that good, but despite that it is a very good place to live in. She said that people are active, especially those with children and there are a lot of good initiatives in the area.

The last spot of the day was the terrace by Mätäjoki, a small creek passing by Kannelmäki. This was the place where there were most visitors during the Restaurant day. When the team arrived a few students living in Kannelmäki were already waiting for Kuutio. During the visit at the terrace there were several café-visitors, most of them had gotten the information through the webpage of the Restaurant day, where the Kuutio-café was registered. There were also people who walked by and stopped to drink a coffee. Towards the afternoon the rain stopped and more people were outside. The area around Mätäjoki is very popular for walking, cycling and jogging, so the spot on the terrace was suitable for spontaneous visits to the mobile café, also, for those who did not know anything about the project beforehand.

After the day the cube was left in a bar opposite the cultural centre, where it had also been the previous night, since the cultural centre was closed on Sundays. The team had agreed with the owner of the bar to have the cube stored there overnight and make coffee in their kitchen in the morning. Unfortunately he had not informed his employers and there was a bit of confusion, one of them was even quite angry. When the team returned to the bar to get the cube stored there again, the owner was present and he simply said he was pleased he could help out. The rest of the week the cube was stored in the cultural centre, Kanneltalo.

23RD OF AUGUST

VISIT AT THE ELDERLY HOME

Kuutio had been moved back to Kanneltalo on Monday, had been in the lobby of the cultural centre after the weekend, and on Thursday the team took it to *Kannelmäen palvelutalo*, a service house for the elderly in Kannelmäki. The team had been in contact with the service house and agreed to visit them, while inviting a group of children from *Vanhaisten päiväkoti*, a kindergarten nearby, to visit the service house. The elderly and the children were first told about the project, and then they were all invited to make pictures and messages describing something that they themselves like. It was a very productive afternoon, especially some of the elderly made several works of art each. The artwork was done by drawing, cutting pictures from magazines and by writing short messages, and was then attached to the table. The plan had been to ask visitors of the café to make pieces of art to attach to the table surface already during the Restaurant day, but because of the wet weather no pottering activities were possible during that day.

Visiting the service house was a way to reach a group of Kannelmäki-residents that would otherwise not have been in contact with the project. One of the main ideas of the project being that of bringing people of the area together, this was partly done in an indirect way, by collecting the artworks and messages which would later be visible to others who came into contact with Kuutio. By inviting the children from the kindergarten there was direct contact between different groups of the area, in this case the meeting created dialogue between different generations. Doing something together, that both the children and the elderly enjoyed and could handle quite independently, created a good atmosphere and a feeling of collaboration among the participants. They were all creating something representing themselves to be attached to the table surface. The artworks served as a source for conversation, the creators of the artworks were asking and telling each other about their works. The day was finished with cake, coffee and juice, so that the elderly and the children would also get the opportunity to experience a visit to the Kuutio café, but this time it was inside and because of the large amount of people, everyone could not sit around the Kuutio-table this time. The initiative to bring Kuutio to the service house seemed appreciated both among the residents of the house and the personnel. Also, the children and their supervisors cheerfully thanked the project team when they headed back to their own premises.

NIGHT OF THE ARTS, KANNELTALO

The 23rd of August was *The night of the Arts*, and the plan was to be at the terrace by Mätäjoki and have a workshop where people could make origami boats, that would be put to float in the river. Unfortunately the weather was again very rainy, so the team agreed on quite short notice with the cultural producers of Kanneltalo that

they could be in the lobby of the cultural centre. The table surface was still humid, because of the glue that was used to attach the artwork done with the children and the elderly during the afternoon. The cube was kept open, so people could see the artwork, but the activities were done around another table. People were invited to leave artwork or messages that would be attached to the table surface later, they could also learn how to make origami cubes. The origami cubes were done instead of the boats that were planned to be made. The cubes served as a link to the cubes that had been spread around the area as advertisement prior to the series of Kuutio -visits in the area. During the night of the arts the team also told people about the project and encouraged people to visit the Finissage on the coming Saturday. Throughout the week there had been a box where people could leave suggestions for where in Kannelmäki the last visit of Kuutio would take place. The box had been placed by the cube in the lobby of Kanneltalo where it was stored in-between the events. On *The Night of the Arts* the box was opened and the finissage was announced to take place in the playground located in the middle of a park area. This playground is often referred to as the church's playground, since is located quite close to the church of Kannelmäki.

24TH OF AUGUST SURPRISE VISIT

The day before the Finnisage the team made a surprise visit to the terrace by Mätä-joki, hoping that they would be able to make the origami-boat installation this evening instead. The weather was again quite unstable, so they could not make any paper boats, but they had a few visitors and good conversations by the coffee table during their few hours' stay by the river. A friend of the author, who was interested in the project, took his accordion with him and played a few pieces of music in-between the rain showers. The music attracted the attention of passers-by and created a nice atmosphere around the coffee table. Our initial idea was to encourage local actors or organizations to set up activities or performances in relation to the temporary meeting places. Bringing a performer, in this case a musician, was a way to have a more vivid setting, even though the musician was not a local actor.

25.8 FINNISSAGE

One of the suggestions given for where the *Finissage* was to take place was the playground located close to the church. The café was placed at a crossing of pedestrian roads beside the playground. The weather was sunny and quite warm so there were people walking by the spot throughout the day. Most of the people who stopped by happened to be out walking or were on their way to the playground, but a few had followed the café with the help of the posters and the blog, and had explicitly come out for a walk in order to visit the café. Two of the visitors who did not come to the café by coincidence, were two elderly ladies who had seen the announcement

in Kanneltalo that the last visit will be in the church playground. They stayed by the café for quite a long time, had coffee and cake and made messages in the table surface. The team had two thermos bottles of coffee with them, and when the first one got empty one of the ladies insisted on taking it with her and making coffee at her place. At first the team did not want to bother her, but finally they agreed that they would give her one of their left over coffee packages in return.

Other visitors throughout the day were both friends of the team, who were curious about the project and passers-by who were out walking. Some of the people living in the houses nearby came to the café and during the day the team also served coffee and cake to a few teenagers passing by. Throughout the week they had mostly been in contact with children, adults and elderly, and it was challenging to get in touch with the teenagers. A few teenage girls made messages to the table and origami -cubes during the Night of the Arts, but otherwise their presence throughout the café visits had been lacking. On the last day the project team met a few teenaged boys, either passing by and stopping for a coffee or hanging out by the playground.

The last day of the series of events throughout the week was, according to the project team, the most successful one. The weather played an important part in making it possible for people to stay at ease by the table. The location was very good, since there were people passing by throughout the day, which also had to do with the good weather. People from different parts of Kannelmäki and of different ages gathered around the table and the team could see that the initiative was appreciated by those who came to have a coffee. While drinking their coffee people were looking at the different messages left in the table, and most of the visitors also made their own artwork.

After the week in Kannelmäki, Kuutio participated in exhibitions in Helsinki and Hyvinkää. In relation to these exhibitions there were a few events organized around the mobile café. These events have been presented in the Kuutio-blog.

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PHOTOS:

Chapter 2

s.18: Helena Hagberg

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s. 64-65 1: Author 2: Anja-Lisa Hirscher 3: Author 4: Author

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2: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/markusthorsen/>

6: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8545333@No7/>

10: Pyry Nousiainen

9: Author

4: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wheany/>

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6: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8545333@N07/>

7: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jepoirrier/>

8: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/leo-avelon/>

9: Author

10: Pyry Nousiainen

11 & 12: Author

13: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ramsd/>

14: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/harrymphoto/>

15: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thebiglunch/>

